

# Common Ground

## An Ozarker and the Jews

Lyle Owen

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THE ROAD FROM PREJUDICE Morris A. Skop

AN AMERICAN CREDO Pauli Murray

TO BE HAPPY MARRIED

George and Helen Papashvily

NOTES ON AMERICAN CULTURE

James G. Leyburn

DADDY Jade Snow Wong

POETS OF WOOD AND WORD Meridel Le Sueur

AMERICAN SONG FROM THE NEGRO David Ewen

— *and others* —

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## AN OZARKER AND THE JEWS

LYLE OWEN

THERE may have been Jews in the Ozarks, for two thousand years have led them to unlikely places, but if any dwelt near our hill home they were unknown to us. When I left Coon Creek for college, I had never seen a Jew. Or, if I had occasionally caught sight of one on a boyhood sojourn in some neighboring urban area, at least there remains no memory of ever looking at anyone and thinking, "There is a Jew."

Perhaps family background helps explain the lack of knowledge of, interest in, or antipathy to these people. I recall no mention of Jews as living beings. To us they were far away, both in time and place. Years of Sunday school and church attendance combined with assiduous Bible reading had certainly left no feeling of the race's responsibility for the death of Jesus. It never occurred to me to blame a whole people for the work of a small group of power-entrenched and sect-blinded ancient priests. Hebrews, instead of being a living part of today's America, were as unreal and remote as Romans and Babylonians, and much more so than Eskimos.

Nor in my four years of college at Springfield, just outside the hills, did anything occur to change the conception much. I was not in the least aware of a

Jewish "problem." No idea that they were a kind of treacherous animal which must be watched, today and always, ever entered my head. In later years I realized that the student body of a thousand or more in a town of fifty thousand must have had a few Hebrews, but then I never thought of it. The students were blonde or brunette, large or small, interesting or dull, rather than representatives of different races.

With a bachelor's degree and a bus ticket I headed north for the famous University of Wisconsin. There I met many Jews and got introduced to the controversy. Whether because this region is more urban, or because Wisconsin is a place where controversy flourishes, or because of the large number of Jewish students at the University, or whether just because I had become less naive, the existence of a "problem" dawned upon me. One cannot be around that stirring campus and not have to ask himself questions. It seemed that in addition to the regular classes, formal and informal lectures and discussions were daily being held, and in an atmosphere of unusual frankness.

There I met men and women, boys and girls, of all backgrounds from the Dakotas to the Bronx, from Japanese to Jew. For the first time these Hebrews,

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represented by some hundreds on the campus, became a living people. They left the limbo of Old Testament myth and Oriental mystery and became classmates, dinner companions, friends—even sweethearts.

Of course there were individuals whose personalities proved uncongenial. But they were of no one race. In the three or four years at Madison I witnessed frequent instances of friction and even attended forums where its causes and cure were argued, yet it was no problem to me. It seemed easy enough to get along with most people of all races. I found the truth to be as Shylock pleaded, that Jews also are humans first.

This country is replete with people who honestly believe, because they do not join in pogroms, that they are not anti-Semitic. It likewise has many Jews who, because they do not seize every opportunity to get the best of Gentiles, feel themselves quite fair to the *goyim*. Both attitudes are far commoner than is generally realized. My own guess, after considerable listening in various sections of the country and among most classes of our people, is that about ninety per cent of non-Semites are anti-Semitic, in intensity ranging from slightly to violently so. By being anti-Semitic I mean having feelings ranging from averse to antagonistic, stronger than against our own people.

My own experience leads me to believe that intrinsically Jews and Gentiles are little different, and that the differences within each group are far larger than any between the groups. The experiences related below will amplify this point. The problem seems to be one of flaws in human nature and human training on both sides, rather than a biological and therefore inevitable deficiency on one side. There is no logical basis for anti-Semitism, though neither is there any

for the extreme sentimental defense of all Jewdom that some of its friends fly to. It appears likely that if our distribution were reversed and ninety-six per cent of the people of the United States were Hebrew while the Gentiles comprised but four per cent, the problem would still be with us. Then "anti-Gentilism" would be in the saddle, and the Jews would have their Ku Klux fringe. Far more numerous among them would be the mildly "anti-Gentiles." This truth of course in no way justifies any current anti-Semitism. It merely shows that neither group can take any pride in attitudes at once so basic and so bad that, if minority and majority were reversed, the essential situation would be the same.

My contacts with Jews in business and professional relations have been mixed in pleasantness and in all other qualities, as one might well expect in any considerable sampling of any people. And the nearest I can come to a generalization about social relations is that I always found opposition from parents when their daughters went with a non-Jew, though courtesy until the non-Jewishness was discovered. Coupled with this attitude has been a general friendliness—at least outwardly apparent—to the Gentile in their homes, clubs, and fraternities when mere acquaintance with sons or the old folks themselves was the issue. Yet throughout the experience runs this thread: the unwillingness or incapacity of many Jews—particularly those of orthodox faith—to distinguish the various Gentile types and personalities. This parallels the Gentiles' equal lack of discrimination between Jews. One hopeful sign is that on both sides the prejudice appears a little less fixed among the young.

University days in Madison taught me the existence of a Jewish "problem," but I left there feeling that it was society's



worry, not mine. In Pittsburgh, where I went to join a college faculty, the "problem" became more personal, for there I began to meet Jewish parents.

Sara was the first Jewish girl I happened to go with in Pittsburgh. The evening I called for the initial date with her she introduced me to her mother, and after a few minutes of casual conversation we left for our movie. Sara never again told me to call at the house for her, though we were together scores of times during the ensuing three years. She would ask me to meet her at some street corner, or at a theater or restaurant, or some friend's home. Afterwards I took her home, of course, and sometimes when it was late enough for all to be quiet we sat on the porch. But I never entered the house again.

It was not long before she told me the reason. There had been a great family row, with much recrimination and pails of parental tears, when it was discovered that their daughter was going with a goy. A most astonishing result of Sara's brother and older sister being called into the council was the revelation that they too were then going with Gentiles! Each of the three had somehow preserved his secret from all save the sad and watchful mother. Each promised to sin no more; what the others did I do not know, but Sara soon called up and arranged for resumption of the rendezvous.

I once suggested to her that she might have saved herself trouble, when introducing me to parents, by slipping a "C" or "K" sound in front of my British surname. "Cohen" would be on the right side, unquestionably, and surely there is little sin in one consonant. She looked at my features earnestly, then smiled and said she was afraid it wouldn't do.

As a matter of fact we might have got around that difficulty too, for a surprising number of Jews have features no one

would recognize as such. It is not at all unusual, on being introduced into a Jewish family, to find that some of the brothers or sisters have "Semitic" features, while the rest lack them completely. Conversely, most of us have seen in Gentile families faces that were remarkably "Jewish" looking. These facts are commonplaces to the anthropologist, of course; all his attempts at racial classification offer similar embarrassments. But many a hotheaded anti-Semite is sure he can always tell. Anti-Semites rush in rashly where anthropologists fear to tread.

The deceptiveness of the eye in this regard was apparently familiar to one of their own people, an old rabbi, bearded and black-coated, who approached me at a streetcar stop and asked in thick English for directions to the nearest synagogue in that city. It happened that I could tell him. He thanked me, and then turned back again, as in afterthought.

"Are you Jewish?" he queried.

"No," I smiled back, thinking a little of Sara and "Cohen."

His palms flew up, and his eyes twinkled. "Vell, you neffer can tell," he said, and with the pronouncement of this great anthropological truth went his way.

Now for another illustration of how parents interpose obstacles to reasonable racial relations. Judith did not look at all Jewish. She was as blue eyed and golden haired, as straight nosed and fair skinned, as Hitler would like all "Aryan" women to be. I was intrigued by her appearance, her femininity, her wit, and her sweetness, and not because of which side Jordan she lived. But the geography asserted itself none the less; first because she told me, and mostly because her parents would not let us forget it.

She was a child of the slums; her family certainly proved that not all Jews are as rich as rumor says. Her father had had his ups and downs, and now had

achieved the social eminence of broom peddler. He had learned to read newspapers in English but spoke the language with an impenetrable accent. The mother spoke English well enough but had not learned to read, and often I heard him reading to her from Yiddish newspapers while I was at their rooms in the evening.

When Judith first introduced me to her father, he was all kindness. Volubly and warmly he offered me a cigar, of a strange crooked style. I never did know what he said, though the daughter later assured me it was in English; but in the spirit of a savage at the trading post I accepted the gift and later tried to pass it off on divers friends.

Try though she did to conceal the fatal news, in time they knew that a goy was in their midst. There was much pleading, many tears, frequent forbidding, but this time the little lady was one of spirit and refused to be told who her friends might be and whom she might bring home. The fact that she was twenty-five, earning money, and paying her way in the home no doubt fortified her resolution.

But under such circumstances wooing was unique and full of difficulties. The parks helped in summertime, but after the first frost we, like the birds, had to seek a winter home. After the walk, the concert, the theater, or dinner together, we settled down on the old sofa which was continually being reupholstered in soot from the steel mill nearby. In these poor quarters no room was well heated save the kitchen, where Ma and Pa kept late vigil over their tea, their Yiddish papers, and their daughter's soul. Many a time I wished to heaven they were country people and knew when to go to bed. "A few cows to milk in the morning would teach the old boy a lesson," I thought.

The parlor, where we refrigerated until the old folks went up to bed, opened into the kitchen. Though from where we sat we could not be seen by them, every parental word came clearly to us, and anything over a murmur on our part constituted an announcement. We huddled together, for warmth and other reasons, and trusted that the stamina of youth would outlast the anger of age.

Conversation in the kitchen was not continuous, but it was often caustic. It was in Yiddish, and chiefly about the faithlessness of daughters and the impudence of a certain man, according to the little translator whose lips lay against his cheek. The old man, scarcely large enough to be formidable even in his prime, none the less went on at a great rate about what he was going to do to that goy any moment now. Generally throwing the culprit out on his ear or other convenient part of the anatomy was the intent, but on grander occasions—perhaps they were the feast days—higher mayhem was contemplated.

But what of the "Jewish traits?" Didn't they show up among all these acquaintances? Yes, sometimes, but little more than among any other considerable group of people—at least as far as the young folks were concerned. For instance, one of the girls I went with had a tendency to push ahead of other people in theaters and elsewhere. Since she was diminutive and vigorous the worming habit worked handily for her, but I was often left in the jam considerably to the rear. A certain amount of raillery, however, plus my refusal to thrust others aside even to keep up with her, soon curtailed the pushing. More important, no other Jewish girl of my acquaintance did this. Should I then generalize and say that Jews are pushers?

The other day I dropped into a busy



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grocery in a section of Pittsburgh called Jewish. Standing just ahead of me at the crowded counter was a woman of middle age. Whether she was Jewish I cannot say, since identification is so often difficult or impossible. I suspect she was. At any rate, as her turn came she looked at me, a stranger, and said, in a remarkably musical voice: "If you have only a few things to get, go ahead, for my list is long."

It was a heart-warming experience for any man who has been elbowed away from doors, counters, and seats by women of many breeds—and which of us has not? But why do we omit the pleasant episodes when we are generalizing the Jews? As I walked away I felt doubly grateful, for I heard her reading the list, and it was long.

It has been my observation that there is even less uniformity among these people as to mentality, attitudes, and personality traits—in all of which opinion frequently holds them uniform—than in their physical features.

But aren't Jews loud? Aren't they annoyingly—sometimes amusingly—excitable? Some are. At the University of Wisconsin I knew a young instructor in philosophy who was most amazingly so. His research record both here and abroad had been brilliant, but temperamentally he was nowise fitted for classroom teaching. He was dropped from the instructional staff; and though his superiors are deemed most fair men, he may to this day believe his discharge an anti-Semitic measure. He was a slight, nearsighted, stooped little man, but what he lacked in appearance and poise he made up in violence. Even the most casual speech was impossible for him without acrobatic action. Talking with the hands was too trivial; his whole anatomy lectured. His speech spurted out violently, flooded forth rapidly, both arms flinging the while in

full and excited circles; his face was contorted, his torso twisted. The whole animation was so comic that one could scarce keep from laughing during his most serious moments, yet what he said was really well worth hearing. He was impatient of others' intellectual and educational shortcomings, and his habit of filling his talk with numerous quotations in half a dozen languages must have been confusing to the beginners in philosophy assigned to him for instruction.

Fairness demands that instead of generalizing from such a case I admit that most professional men of Hebrew extraction whom I have known have been as calm in conversation or lectures as anyone might wish. Besides, I recall some overloud and excitable fellow teachers of the most respectable Gentile heritage. Nor can I forget my own tendency, when the going gets warm, to let my hands do part of the thinking.

Among the students, too, one sees and hears the whole gamut of expressiveness. I have had some of them, both Jewish boys and girls, who were exceedingly windy; and a few who unabashedly answered all the questions before the pupils called upon had a chance to reply. One girl, a bright one too, sat in the back of a large class and promptly contradicted, without asking or being asked, virtually everything either I or her forty fellow students said. This went on for a semester; yet I was glad of her goading presence, for many in this class were apathetic—and in education nothing is worse than that. Besides, much that was said needed contradiction.

But my classes have also contained Jewish students who spoke only moderately, and others—a surprising number, some of them very able—who went to the extreme of quietness both in and out of school. Some of the Jews, gentle in demeanor and quietly musical of voice, ven-

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ture opinions only when asked, and then are judiciously tentative about it.

Likewise among the Gentile students all these traits are found. Where, then, is the rule?

Jews are radical, it is said. Some certainly are; the communist movement has its share. It is not strange that minorities, feeling themselves excluded or even persecuted, sometimes lean toward critical or even radical opinion more than the majority who have made the *status quo* and like it.

At a debate between two able antagonists—a professor from the University of Pittsburgh, and Scott Nearing (when Nearing still nestled in the bosom of the Party)—some of the Jewish students were quite boisterously inattentive and unfair to the rightist speaker and applauded to the skies even trivial or irrelevant sallies by Nearing. And later, when we were post-morteming this rally, one of my Carnegie Tech students very bluntly called me “naive” for not granting that communism would be ruling America in a year or two. That was a dozen years ago.

Yes, some Jews are radical, but I can never forget my friend Jacobs, perhaps the most reactionary educated man I have ever known. He is a businessman, forty-five perhaps, and if anything has happened under Roosevelt which is not an obvious and gross example of the most ruinous communism, devastating to the nation, I have yet to hear him admit it. I say this after many hours of conversation extending over several years.

Are Jews ungenerous? Are they avaricious? Won't they do you in business if they get a chance? That depends on the Jew. I know a professor who rode to work for years with a Gentile colleague and never once offered to help on the gasoline. Others are generosity itself.

Jews are human, and, while like other people some will be saints in a world of

wickedness and others devils in the face of saintliness, most of them respond to treatment in kind. Here is the story of Johnson, for instance. By some of his acquaintances he was thought grasping. But I found him kindness itself, most generous with his goods and his time. This intellectual loved candy, and to have it at hand for nourishing his brain children he bought expensive sweets almost daily, and brought them to his office, which was shared by half a dozen colleagues and assistants. At his repeated invitation we all helped ourselves liberally, even in his absence—so much so that I for one was ashamed of myself. And though he was busy he went out of his way to help us with our work.

As a token of thankfulness I once left on Johnson's desk an inexpensive reference book which I had heard him speak of getting, and inscribed the flyleaf in appreciation. He looked at the volume when he came in next, but put it away without comment or thanks. It was never left lying out; I wondered afterwards whether that was not because he was too modest to want the inscription read. But not long after, while I was on Christmas vacation in the Ozarks, there came a beautiful leather traveling kit worth several of my book. There was no getting ahead of this generous Jew. Yet though he was financially well off, he was considered to be quite exacting by some whom he suspected of trying to cheat him.

Nor are the other “Jewish” traits characteristic of Jews alone. If, in my old home community, a relative or acquaintance talks loudly or with his hands, or is avaricious, or pushing, no one thinks of attributing the trait to the fact that he is a Scotch-Irishman. Nor if we are cheated by a “friend” or relative (and who has not been?) do we think of exclaiming, “Why, that dirty Anglo-Saxon!” Instead we con-

clude that Cousin Bob is a skunk and let it go at that; we may add a tender touch like a lawsuit or, if the case is really provoking, a little buckshot is not unknown. But we do not blame the race; that would, uncomfortably, cast doubt on ourselves.

My Uncle Joe has been a failure in more things than one could believe, yet the years have accustomed us to his loud certainties as to how the world, the country, and everybody's family should be run. Saying that he is a Scotch-Irishman will describe his hereditary make-up as well as any single term. But not even his long-suffering auditors would think of wishing that "for God's sake, the damned old Scotch-Irishman would button his lip!" No, there are too many Scotch-Irishmen around for that. It is just "Uncle Joe" in our thoughts, sometimes garnished by expressive adjectives or other parts of speech, to be sure, but no racial epithets. If he were one of a few Scotch-Irishmen in a nation of Jews, however, it is quite likely that his traits, often by us called "Jewish," would then be said to be obviously "Scotch-Irish." What magic there is in majorities!

This loose generalizing about what Sumner called the "others-group" or the "out-group," characteristic alike of most Jews and Gentiles, is sometimes based on lack of careful reasoning from our personal and perhaps unfortunate experiences with members of the opposite group. Sometimes, however, the antagonisms accompany simple ignorance; the strangers have never met. A distinguished social psychologist once told me of a class he polled in a western university, about the time of the Armenian trouble, to determine among other things the title for "the worst race." The Turks won handily. Then he asked how many had ever known a Turk. No one had.

A colleague of mine amuses himself by recalling his feeling toward Hu Shih years

ago when the two were at Cornell. He liked the Chinese lad but says that he sometimes wondered if he were not being too friendly with an Oriental, for after all wasn't Hu Shih of a colored race? But travel and the years washed away all such prejudice, and my friend now smiles wryly when he relates the tale of one white youngster's feeling of superiority toward the distinguished father-to-be of the Chinese Renaissance.

The Jews are said to be clannish. This is truest of the older ones, but even the young naturally feel sensitive to not being wanted, and that is much of the explanation for their own exclusiveness where it occurs. I was often reluctant to return to a Jewish home even when re-invited by the daughter, after finding that the parents resented my presence. Suppose as a consequence I had withdrawn to my own people and had had nothing to do with Jews thereafter. For them then to accuse me of being unjustifiably snobbish or exclusive would scarcely seem fair; yet this is a pretty close parallel to what happens the other way round. Or, when I continued to come to their home, as I sometimes did, doubtless I was accused by some of being an impudent, pushing fellow! Where have we heard that before?

A few days ago one of my Gentile students told me that one thing wrong with the Jews is that they are clannish—they stick to themselves too much. A few minutes later he said the trouble with them is that they are always getting into other people's groups and organizations. He damned them if they did and he damned them if they didn't. I put his two statements side by side and asked him to compare them; he conceded that maybe they were not strikingly consistent. For the first time, apparently, he saw the unfairness of impeaching Jews for exclusiveness and also for wanting to join.

The study of the origins of clannishness

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shows why Gentiles can take the first step toward unity more gracefully, even though the fault appears to be about equal, and even though both Jews and non-Jews ought to try going more than half way toward not only toleration but understanding and acceptance. For when the majority extends the first hand, no accusation of special pleading can be made, whereas minorities always run the risk of being suspected, fairly or not, of having an ax to grind when theirs is the first friendly gesture.

Some of the Jewish girls with whom I associated were in the beginning somewhat anti-Gentile, and one evidence of the good of keeping friendly company is that they became less so, and will, I think, never again be so much so, though we never meet again. We discussed racial relations frequently and frankly with much mutual benefit. Judith, for example, started off with a belief, rationalized rather than reasoned of course, in the innate intellectual superiority of Jews. But when faced with the science of the subject she quickly yielded the point. Doubtless it was the friendliness of the presentation as much as the invulnerability of the logic that turned the trick.

Not only is their lengthy history of segregation and persecution some excuse for clannishness, but sometimes there is the additional basis of a "chosen people" religious belief. God knows that the Jews are not sole possessors of this complex, for almost every race, even the most benighted, has had it in one form or another. But in so far as this Jehovah-sanctioned belief does prevail among America's Jews, it is doubtless decreasing among the young ones, much as the more orthodox oldsters may wish to the contrary.

The tale has been told and the mutual guilt assessed. What can be done?

Most of us are not and never will be

leaders of importance. Neither our word nor our example can carry very far in the first instance. But a small circle of immense influence we do have—our families if no more. Each Gentile can do the very simple thing of remembering that Jews, like the rest of us, are humans first and only secondarily whatever else they may be. Each Jew can remember that there are as many differences among Gentiles as there are among his own people whom he knows so well. We can watch well that even in the immediacy and casualness of our own homes we never, by loose racial generalizations, give aid and comfort to those who are either carelessly or venomously anti-anything.

Yet how many of us, even the well educated and the kind hearted, violate this simplest rule of reason. I personally know many doctors of science and philosophy who do. "That Jew," we say, with a tone only slightly disparaging; and because bludgeons for a pogrom have not been brandished, we think we are not anti-Semitic. We laugh at unfair stories (I am not talking about the kindly ones) or nod an assent when a race has been lumped. Even some of us who are educated enough to know that the anthropologist and the psychologist would smile at our generalizations do this.

The anti-Semitism of the bulk of us, the kind hearted, is not organized or venomous; it is careless and casual. So is most anti-Gentilism. Yet relatively innocuous remarks and actions may collectively fertilize breeding grounds for turmoil of the most vicious sort, even the planned pogrom. It is perhaps most important of all, therefore, that our own children, whether Jew or Gentile, never hear us say things about other people which imply what science knows is not true, that there are vast racial uniformities and, even more important, general racial inferiorities. We should leave clear in young minds the

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knowledge that in every race the differences between individuals are much greater than any significant difference between the races. This is not only humane; it is excellent science, particularly as to mental ability and character. For the promotion of both true democracy and the essence of Christianity, we can do nothing more valuable for these young minds than by our own daily example to lead them to think of Saul Rosenblatt not as a Jew but as Saul Rosenblatt. For the best of Christianity is perhaps its emphasis upon the fraternity and equality of men, and here the ideals of Christianity and democracy are parallel. No man can hate Jews and be a Christian; nor can any Jew dislike Gentiles as such and be a democrat.

There is encouragement in the fact that the family circle, small as it is, and also the friendly circle are in their influence expanding ones. Each of us from his own experience can recount a surprising number of examples (and far more doubtless go unremembered) of others' casual remarks or actions which have been, if not the turning point in our lives, at least of much greater formative import than the authors could have suspected.

Yet as college teachers some of us labor long and semi-futilely to correct early miseducation in these matters. Parents can

do most, and frequently do least, to teach kindness toward neighbors and thoughtful skepticism toward easy generalizations. How much of the time of schools, even at the university level, is wasted in unlearning because of the faulty informal education of the home!

The slums in which Judith grew up abounded in children of divers races, colors, and present conditions of servitude to ignorance. Part of the education this little girl got from those of her Pittsburgh chums whose parents were followers of the One Who taught that all men are brothers was this: The children would chase this sensitive child down the streets, shouting "You killed Jesus! You killed Jesus!"

"No!" she screamed in terror. "No, I didn't kill him. I didn't kill anybody," and wept.

Are not two thousand years enough?

Where did these children get the germs of this distorted idea? What a legacy for Americans to leave their children in a world where, if anything will cure its ills, it must be science oriented by kindness.

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*Lyle Owen is a member of the faculty of Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. CG readers will remember him for his "Your Million Fathers" in our Summer 1944 issue.*

## THE ROAD FROM PREJUDICE

MORRIS A. SKOP

EVER since I received my first mental shock in Hebrew School as a lad of thirteen, I have been interested in intercultural relations. This shock was the realization that the Jewish people were not the first people on earth. There were many peoples before Abraham, the first Jew. Despite the fact that in my home I heard only the fascinating Old Testament stories, heard Yiddish and Hebrew spoken, enjoyed Jewish customs and holidays, Jewish dishes, knew only of the Jewish Synagogue, I soon learned from my school experiences that there were other children who knew nothing of this. I felt sorry for them. They did not know what the beautiful Shabbat meant; did not know that holy language—Hebrew; never heard those wonderful Yiddish stories, never tasted those delicious Sedar and Purim and Chanukah delicacies and goodies. What was more surprising was the fact that they did not even miss these things.

It gradually dawned upon my childish mind that there was something more than my Jewish world existing in my beloved America. Jews were not the only people in America. I became adventurous and curious. Against my parents' advice, I entered a church for the first time. I was astounded. No Torah, no Mogan David (Star of David), no Tale-sim (prayer shawls), and above all—no Hebrew books! The first chance I got, I recall asking my schoolmate Bill to take me to his church and explain to me how it was possible he was such a fine fellow and not a Jew. He never even put on

Tephilin and couldn't pray to God in Hebrew, which I was convinced was God's own language. A world of new ideas was opened to me by my Christian young friend. I was shocked later to learn that my parents had never known of this new world. They had heard a few things about the Christian world but they were afraid of it. They started to tell me stories about their experiences in Russia and Poland, where my father, as a little boy, was given a bloody head for walking in front of a Christian church. A Jew must not walk there. And my mother told me of a tragic day on a Christian holiday called Easter, when she ventured out into the street to see a parade of Polish Christians. The Polish children, spying the two Jewish children, ran after them and scared them away. I could not understand this. My mother remarked, however, "Things are different here in America, my son. This is a wonderful, free country of many peoples who are living in peace—and they are not all Jews."

From those early days on to college days, I sought out, first out of curiosity, then out of understanding and friendship, persons who were different from me. I met my first Negro on a playground in Cleveland, Ohio. I may have seen Negroes as a young child, but the difference in color must have made no impression. But at the age of fifteen, I was fascinated. Curly hair, black skin, a hearty laugh. And he, also, not a Jew! Then I recalled my earlier school-day stories about the red-skinned men called Indians. And somewhere on Kinsman Road was a man with



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a yellow skin, a Chinese, who ran a laundry. Fearing to go alone, yet eager to see this unusual human being with a yellow skin, I influenced my Hebrew School friend, Ben Levine, to come along with me. I shall never forget my childish feeling of trepidation upon entering the laundry. Sure enough—a yellow-skinned man. And he was friendly and smiled. And he spoke English—a bit peculiarly, but quite understandably.

Later, in college at Ohio State University, I became more and more absorbed in people, especially those unusual students who met at the Student Union, having come from different parts of the world, and were there studying in an American university. And all these different people were not Jews. Nor were they Christians either! This was a new revelation. That tall, slant-eyed fellow was from far-away Japan and he spoke of his religious faith as Shintoism. That fine, dark girl with the sparkling black eyes was from India and spoke of Mohammedanism. And that small, thin, brilliant fellow in my sociology class was from Puerto Rico. They were all friendly and gracious and keen-minded and clean. I liked them and began meeting with them and talking of many things and places.

I realized the world was bigger than my Jewish and Hebrew-Bible world. I learned there were many people in America besides the Jews. Above all, I began to understand my people were but a small group among many larger groups of different peoples, who spoke different languages, ate different foods, and lived different lives from mine. Yet my life was full and interesting and fascinating. I felt sorry these other fine young fellows and girls were missing something splendid. My traditions and home life were inspiring and beautiful; I couldn't tear myself away from my Jewish customs and ceremonies. I was tremendously impressed

that as I got to know these other young students they did not require me to change my way of life. These new friends of differing backgrounds and different appearances just accepted me as I was. In fact, they wanted to know all about my background and my language and my holiday celebrations.

Then I got my first deep realization that my parents' world had been different from mine. I lived in America. And America was different. Here one could be different and yet be treated with equality and respect. Here the churches were open even to Jewish boys. I could enter and leave without molestation. No one drove me away from the impressive Easter parade on Euclid Avenue. Once I joined right in and marched along with some of my friends of the Christian church and no one said a word. Later I realized that a Jewish boy did not particularly belong in an Easter parade for other serious reasons, just as a Chanukah candelabrum did not particularly belong in my friend Bill's home on Christmas.

Time flew by. Studies in philosophy followed. A Christian professor of philosophy, Dr. Joseph Leighton of Ohio State, encouraged me also to read Jewish philosophy. He opened to me the world of Maimonides. He placed before me the world of Crescas and Jehudah Halevi and Ibn Gabirol. Here I was, in a great state university in America, being taught by a Christian professor, and studying Jewish philosophy!

In my senior year, I roomed with a fellow who was also studying philosophy; he was going to be a Catholic priest. Here was another new experience. He noticed one morning that I was putting on my Phylacteries at morning prayer. He waited until I finished and then he opened a different kind of Bible and showed me that centuries ago his God wore them also. That marked my first

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contact with a Catholic and my first contact with another Bible. I knew, of course, of the New Testament, but my parents had taught me it was just a copy of our Hebrew Bible. I got my friend McBride to let me read it. I recognized that the English words in many places were direct translations of phrases from my Hebrew Bible. "Love thy neighbor" came from Leviticus; "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" came from the beautiful Psalms. But I found new stories and new names and that new Personality—Jesus. And he was a Jew and went to Synagogue as I did, and he also wore the Phylacteries and Talis at prayer. From then on, I planned to enter the Seminary and, just as Bill McBride was going to enter the Seminary and minister to his people and dedicate his life to acquainting other people with his Catholic Church and his background and way of life, I would do the same for my Hebrew people and differing neighbors in free America. I would become a Rabbi.

In New York for the first year of my Seminary days, I went everywhere. To Chinatown, Harlem, the Ghetto, the great Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Jewish Temples and Synagogues; to Catholic Mass on Christmas night, to Little Ireland and Little Italy. America became more fascinating than ever. A great country, my birthplace, interesting and full of varied peoples and places and foods and customs and ceremonies. I welcomed every new face. I spent hours and nights at the International House where there were students from all over the world. Everyone was friendly. There was no one to say to me, "Go away. You are a Jew and do not belong here."

But gradually I was awakened. All was not so pleasant and peaceful in my wonderful America. The old dormitory of the Seminary was being torn down for new quarters. We students had to find

places near the Seminary college halls. I went for a room on Riverside Drive. The kind-faced lady asked if I were a Spaniard. "No," I proudly stated, "I am a Jew and studying across the way at the Seminary to be a Rabbi." "I'm sorry," came the curt reply. "We do not rent to Jews." Perhaps incredibly, this was my first contact with anti-Semitism.

As the months rolled by, I ran across not only more anti-Semitism but once, when walking into a restaurant with a colored student studying at another Biblical Seminary in New York, the man at the restaurant door stopped us and said, "Sorry, you"—pointing to the Negro—"you cannot eat here. No Negroes allowed. But you"—pointing to me—"can come right in." I was stunned. I walked right out. I was terribly embarrassed at the feeling of shame coursing through my Negro friend. He apologized to me for causing the inconvenience and offered to wait outside while I went in and ate. "No sir, Owen, either we both eat somewhere together or we buy our lunch and eat in my room." Owen later became one of America's finest religious teachers and writers and an honored leader. I then resolved, as my Seminary years were drawing to a close, that I would become a Rabbi in a part of America where there were many people who hated their fellow Americans. I would start my Rabbinical career in a city where Jews did not understand Christians; where whites did not like blacks; where ignorance and prejudice kept Americans from knowing their brothers.

In my years in the American Rabbinate in a southern city, I have been shocked anew. I have discovered Jews professing Judaism, which taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, hating and misunderstanding non-Jews. I have discovered Christian preachers, quoting the great teachings of Jesus, whom

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they professed to admire and follow as a God, hating Jews and despising Negroes and joining organizations to destroy Catholics, Negroes, and Jews. I discovered the Ku Klux Klan. I met a member of the Silver Shirts passing out leaflets preaching lies about my Hebrew traditions, quoting unheard-of passages from the Talmud about Jews teaching hatred of non-Jews. For weeks I searched in the Talmud and asked my teachers, who knew all the great Hebrew writings, if there were such teachings. I was tragically hurt at the flagrant forgery. I discovered, too, that this Silver Shirt worker was an active leader in a Christian church.

What was the reason people professed beautiful faiths and deliberately acted opposite to their teachings? What were the reasons for the great chasm between the teachings of a religious faith and the perversion of those teachings in daily living? Perhaps people did not clearly understand the implications of those teachings. Perhaps Jews quoted the great Psalm: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," and interpreted "brother" as only a fellow-Jew. Perhaps Christians were quoting Jesus as saying, "Love thy neighbor," and meaning by "thy neighbor" only a Methodist or Catholic or Presbyterian. Perhaps Christians and Jews were interpreting their common teaching of "Have we not all one Father, hath not One God created us all—why then shall we deal treacherously every man against his brother, to profane the Covenant of our fathers?" as meaning everyone except those who are not white or Christian or Jew. What about the black Ethiopians and Negroes? What about the yellow and brown Indians and Chinese? What about the human beings who are not all white and not all black and not all brown or red?

I saw that unless the Church and Synagogue, Rabbi, Minister, and Priest, could

correct the false impressions of these ancient noble religious texts and teach their correct implications for our day, then the America and the democracy we dream about will be unrealized. Somehow they must be translated into meaning for our time. They must reach the landlady who refused me my room, the restaurant owner who refused to feed my Negro friend because his skin was black. My neighbors of the Ku Klux Klan and the Silver Shirts must see that to attend church on Sunday and be undemocratic and un-Christian on Monday is a betrayal of America, that hatred of Jews and Negroes and Catholics is decidedly un-Christian. If it could be possible for me to grow out of my early prejudices and narrow world, through contact and understanding of other people and still remain a loyal American and devoted Jew, with malice toward none and charity for all, other Americans could be taught to do the same.

Each of the great religious sources of the past has given us golden bricks and mortar in the building of that house of human freedom called America, that treasure house of the human spirit called democracy. Yet unless we build anew for our own day with the bricks of human understanding, unless Christians and Jews and other religious leaders realize the meaning of these significant ideas for the age of humanity now dawning, then Church and Synagogue will fail in their mission, and Rabbis, Ministers, and Priests will ultimately fail in their dedicated tasks of establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth through the Brotherhood of Man.

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*Rabbi Morris A. Skop of Orlando, Florida, is working on a booklet for use in schools on the implications of ancient religious texts in connection with modern problems such as slums, wages, and racial equality.*

## OPEN LETTER

OWEN DODSON

*Brothers, let us discover our hearts again,  
Permitting the regular strong beat of humanity there  
To propel the likelihood of other terror to an exit.*

*For at last it is nearly ended: the daily anguish needles  
Probing in our brains when alarms crust the air  
And planes stab over us.*

*(Tears screamed from our eyes,  
Animals moaned for death, gardens were disguised,  
Nubs strained for the whole again.)*

*For at last it is nearly ended, grass  
Will be normal, hillsides  
Pleased with boys roaming their bellies.*

*All the mourning children  
Will understand the long word, hallelujah,  
Each use for joy will light for them.*

*The torn souls and broken bodies will be restored,  
Primers will circulate for everlasting peace,  
The doors to hope swung open.*

*Brothers, let us enter that portal for good  
When peace surrounds us like a credible universe.  
Bury that agony, bury this hate, take our black hands in yours.*

Owen Dodson, poet and playwright, is a familiar contributor to COMMON GROUND.

## TO BE HAPPY MARRIED

GEORGE AND HELEN PAPASHVILLY

NATURALLY when I engaged myself for marriage with Helena Gerbertovna, I went right away with heartful of happiness to carry the good news to my friends.

But seemed like they weren't so pleased. Vactangi showed long horse face. Challico sat dark blue in a corner. Even Illarion, practically American himself now, doesn't give me any support. Only Dzea shook my hand and that sadly. "You take a big chance, Bijō, to marry with an American girl." All he said.

"First place," Vactangi pointed out, "American young ladies don't like foreigner names. Now you have to change yours. One Russian, I knew him well, immediately he married American young lady she made him go in court take the name of Gerbert Goover. For honor. Next electing Gerbert Goover don't wins. How he feels then, that Russian fellow? Be same with you."

"Main thing," Illarion said, "the American girls I met so far can only cook out of books."

"See. Something else you didn't know," Vactangi said. "Lose the book. Phiiiiittt. No eat. You'll starve."

"I can buy another book," I said.

"And what's more," Challico has his turn, "Americans cooking every day just enough. Two peoples, two steaks. Three peoples, three steaks. Never cooking one extra piece for the pot's good luck. Company comes unexpected they gonna sit hungry. You'll die from shame before you're six months married."

"Yes," Vactangi said, "and after your

funeral there won't be any table either. Maybe a cup a tea for who carries your burial box. I won't come."

"Never can enjoy the pleasure at meal-time to call in strangers passing on the road to share your table." Challico shook his head. "Won't even be any use to get rich. You'll have a shiny white five hundred dollar pull a button, push a button refrigerator and not one extra piece of baloney to keep inside."

"But you don't know the worst thing that's gonna happen in your house," Vac-



tangi warned. "American young ladies all keep bodguts."

"Helena Gerbertovna has dog," I said. "Irishman setter named Veleike Kneecaz. Comes 'Duke' in English. But that's all."

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"Bodguts means writing down moneys before you spending," Vactangi explained. "Suppose you not feeling good, we take for example. You want to stop in Russian Club drink glass of vodka, eat piece herring maybe, for your stomach. You have to write down in bodguts first:

"I'm drinking whiskeys . . . . 35c  
"Eating piece herring, too . . . 10c"

"Where you ever knew American young lady to find out such informations?" I asked him.

"That's enough, boys," Dzea said. "If they promised to each other, can't help now. Damage is done." He shook my hand again. "Never mind, I stood your friend twenty years, Bijo Gogio, and I don't stop now."

Well, I didn't pay attentions to them and everything was fine. First time in my life I had a family—best mother a man could want, a sister with a sweet face that smiled, even a grandmother. Should have everybody a grandmother to make a dignified ornament for the house.

So I lived under a bright blue sky in my shining world until the day came the ladies was planning for the wedding company.

"If you want to invite ten or eleven people," My Mother said to me, "and fifteen more here—we'd better count on about thirty, I suppose. Patty shells, and three, no, four chickens, mushrooms—"

Four chickens. This is a terrible situation. But better I tell now what kind of countryman I have than they find it out at the table. "Dzea Vanno—Uncle John—can eat two chickens alone by himself," I said, "when he's in good appetite."

My Mother looked surprised. "Goodness, doesn't it give him high blood pressure?"

"Seems healthy enough," I said, "for man eighty-five anyway."

"Well, more chickens then and French

peas, those petit pois, and tiny hot biscuits. Then a mousse—"

"Moose be O.K.," I said. "Can make *shashlik* from haunches and boil up the shoulders—" I see Helena Gerbertovna is laughing.

"Mousse is like ice cream," Sister whispered to me.

Just shows you never can tell. For me is like elk. But I don't say anything.

"Look, dear," My Mother suggested. "Suppose we do it this way. You tell us about a wedding breakfast in Georgia and then we'll see what we can manage."

"They never stop at breakfast," I said. "They eat all day."

"Well, what do they have?"

"First is fishes," I said, "maybe white sturgeon smoked over hickory, and mountain trout fried crispy in sweet butter, and *zootki*, that's like bass, with a sauce of carrot and dill and bay, and then *satules* and *sprats* and *oragueli*, a *kalmaki*, he's a big fish baked with a slice of lemon in his mouth. Then little caviar for anybody likes it, dusted over with chopped chives, and let's see—"

"Sounds like real good shore dinner back to hum in the state of Maine," Grandmother said. "You folks ever eat lobster?"

"Not usually," I told her, "but wouldn't do any harm to put three or four on the table. Maybe somebody likes to try them. I guess that be enough for the fish."

"What comes next?" Sister asked. She's writing it all down with pencil.

"*Satskalis Katzes Kezilala*—means poor man's caviar," I said. "We always have that because it's easy. Scoop whole baked egg plants out of their skins and mash up with fine, fine chopped green baby onions, lemon juice, oil, tarragon, and parsleys."

"Oil, tarragon, egg plant," My Mother was repeating faintly, "sturgeon, caviar—"

"The soup we can skip," I said, "so next comes meats. First the roast turkeys



with t'sat t'sivi sauce. Is Dzea Vanno's speciality, t'sat t'sivi sauce, and—wait—” That gave me idea. “With your kind permission how would it be if I asked Uncle John to come few days early and he can manage everything?”

“You mean he's a cook?” My Mother said.

“He had restaurant for years and years,” I said. “Don't worry more.”

“Well,” My Mother breathed a big sigh, “that will be just fine. He'll tell us what to order and Helen can watch him and learn some dishes for you. It doesn't make any difference how much he charges. A caterer. We should have thought of that before.”

What means caterer? Should I ask? No. If it's about food, Dzea will manage it.

So I made the arrangements, and few days before the wedding I went to the station to take Dzea Vanno off the train. He's so surrounded with packages and cartons and suitcases I tell him he looks like mother hen with chicks.

“Well, I couldn't decide which my cherkasskas to bring,” he said. “My black one with the sable hat or my white one with the astrakahn. So I finally made a choice and brought both. Then there's my soup kettle and some herbs probably can't get in place like this and—” Names over a dozen articles he can't live without.

I picked everything up and stowed in car. Everything, that is, except the velvet portfolio where Uncle John carried his big desperate butcher knives, and the wicked bladed slicers and his curved edged corers and the choppers and little fancy cutters, sharp as a razor. This nobody was ever allowed to touch except Dzea himself. Artist's tools.

We drove home and I took him in hall.

“Is that man to cook?” My Mother said.

Dzea was sorting his luggages and tak-

ing out this and that, but soon he heard lady's voice he looked in mirror, gave last pull to his coat, and made an entrance. First he bowed to room, then he kissed hands all around, next he presented bouquet of red roses to the Grandmother, offered satin box of fruit glaze to My Mother, gave Sister a bottle of perfume tied with bow, and made a speech in Georgian. When he finished that, he found small jeweler's box in his pocket for Helena Gerbertovna, kissed me on both cheeks, and sat down.

The Grandmother got her breath back first. “Much obliged. But what did he say?”

“He thanks you for the honor of your invitation,” I said, “and he wishes a long life in a happy family together for us all. He regrets I don't have no mother and my father is so far away, but he will be pleased to act my nearest relative in all ceremonies necessary.”

“Thank him for us, please,” My Mother said. “Express our appreciation.”

Uncle John spoke again.

“He says,” I explained, “that to save the ladies the trouble of writing long lists for the party he gives himself the pleasure of accompanying you to the market tomorrow. He helps you choose everything.”

“Can't we talk with him?” Sister asked.

Uncle John had himself pretty well collected together by this time and he understood the question. He rose. “I luff you,” he said in English. “I luff you all,” and sat down again.

So for next few days the house was full of party, and from early morning you couldn't hear anything but the sound of chopping, stirring, rolling, pounding, oven doors snapping open and shut, tops of pots dancing with steam—a regular symphony with Dzea, waving his big wooden spoon, the concert master. He was having grand time—peeking into bins and count-

ing silver and popping in and out of the pantry to look over each new pattern of dishes came down off the shelf, and twirling empty wine glass in his fingers while he remembered next new dish he could surprise us with.

First day Dzea and the Grandmother had some sharp words over the right brine for pickled peppers, but like many quar-

disgrace my friends and my country in the critical moment.

At last the great day came; the ceremony is over and I'm a married man. And after all the congratulations are said and we get enough good wishes to furnish our life for a century, it comes time to sit down at the beautiful table where candles shine and roses bloom and the



rels they was the better friends afterward, especially when they discovered they was both great believers in the principle of the bean, baked, boiled, fried, in soup, and in salad, as man's best friend.

As for ladies came to call, Uncle John was always having long tête-à-têtes with them about best way to candy quinces or listening to confidential details about a certain angel cake recipe they knew, and for his spare minutes house was full of cooking gadgets he never tried before—slicer for making dried apples, a carved butter mold, and if you can imagine it, he even proposed I take apart some kind of special coffee grinder, almost heirloom, came around the Horn with Helena Gerbertovna's great-grandfather, just so he can see how it pulverizes coffee so fine.

Naturally I had no time for foolishness like this. I needed my whole days to memorize the wedding service so I don't

food—well, maybe some of the American guests were little surprised and shocked to see this different kind of wedding refreshment. But not so surprised they couldn't eat with brisk appetite and not so shocked they didn't come back for second and—might as well tell the truth—third and fourth helpings.

As for my friends, when they saw table, Challico was man enough to make me apology, and even Vactangi admitted he didn't see any better since his uncle's daughter got married. So everybody was happy.

Meantime Uncle John was sitting in midst of American ladies humming like a buzz in a bouquet of flowers and darting his head this way and that. "So we pound nuts to paste," I heard him say. "Then we mix with chopped onions—"

"Raw onion?" Ladies is leaning forward with all attention.

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"Yes, Madame, but don't be alarmed. We cut his claws, because next comes lemon juices and then a pepper—"

"Sweet pepper?"

"Sweet as lady's smile," Uncle John bows. "Sweet green bell pepper. Then parsleys and kinsey, our special herb, and we mash it all with fresh young green beans—"

"Delightful," lady with piled-up curls sings, "perfectly delightful."

"And that's our M'tswane Lobeo."

So time passed. There were some toasts and some tears and lots of laughing and at last came hour we had to leave because we were going on a trip. Then, of course, everybody remembered one last thing they forgot to say before and Helena Gerbertovna had another costume to put on and after that she must cut few more slices of wedding cake and throw her bouquet. And the tickets? Where's my train tickets?

"Illarion—" he's my best man—"where you put the train tickets? Quick!"

He says, "In your wallet."

What kind of place is that to hide train tickets? But, thank God, I find.

And now, just before we're ready to leave, Uncle John makes an excuse to find Helena Gerbertovna in the hall, and he tells her a long secret. It's so important he must have repeated it over twice, because through the archway I see her nod yes. And again, yes.

But at last we're on our way.

Person can enjoy to have one wedding, but for my part I don't think I could ever live through two.

"So now," I said to Helena Gerbertovna—we're in the train—"let's don't start our home by keeping secrets from each other. What Uncle John told you?"

She's laughing. "Another recipe."

"My God," I said, "what was this one for?"

"If you want to be happy married," he whispered in my ear, 'at least once a day say to your husband, "I love you!" And whenever you set a table for Georgians, remember—only too much is ever enough.'"

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*Publication of the Papashvilys' book, Anything Can Happen, of which this chapter is a part, was postponed from the date announced in our last issue, October 25th, to January 2nd, because of its selection as a Book-of-the-Month. We can think of few nicer ways to begin the new year than by reading the complete volume! For Helen Papashvily's reaction to sudden fame, see her letter in the Miscellany columns.*

*(For precisionists, Helena Gerbertovna translates as Helen, daughter of Herbert. Her maiden name is Waite.)*

*The illustrations are by Kurt Werth.*

## AN AMERICAN CREDO

PAULI MURRAY

I AM an American. I lay no claim to an ancestry which arrived here by the Mayflower or by the slave-ship of 1619. I do regard myself, however, as a representative of blended humanity, carrying in my bloodstream the three great races of man—Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongolian. Some of my ancestors came from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England. Others came over in chattel-ships from Africa. Others were indigenous to American soil and met the colonists when they arrived. They all fought it out here and fused their bloods. I am the product. Therefore I will resist every attempt to categorize me, to place me in some caste, or to assign me to some segregated pigeonhole.

Nobody gave me my freedom. I owe it to no political party or the goodwill of any group. I inherited it. Some of my forefathers fought for it at Appomattox, Petersburg, and Richmond. Others toiled for it in Carolina tobacco fields, paying their masters dollar for dollar, and bought it. Others paid for it with their health, sanity, and their lives, jumping overboard from slave vessels or lying in swamps and crawling through the night into the shelter of the Underground Railroad. Others pulled a "mass strike" when the Union Armies invaded the Confederacy and helped disintegrate the labor force of the rebellious South. The Proclamation of Emancipation which Lincoln signed in 1863 was but the historical and documentary recognition of an accomplished fact.

As an American I inherit the magnifi-

cent tradition of an endless march toward freedom and toward the dignity of all mankind. And though my country has not always loved me, yet in the words of the poet, Claude McKay, "I must confess I love this cultured hell which tests my strength." Loving it as I do, I am determined that my country shall take her place among nations as a moral leader of mankind. No law which imprisons my body or custom which wounds my spirit can stop me.

That my country may accomplish this great task of history, I must make myself worthy to be called an American. I would bring shame and disgrace upon the United States' flag if I tolerated for one moment any practice of discrimination, segregation, or prejudice against any human being because of an accident of birth which has determined race, color, sex, or nationality and helped to shape his or her creed.

For history moves in strange and unpremeditated ways. But for an error in navigation or a perverse trade wind the pioneers who reached Massachusetts would have landed in Virginia. As it was, the Virginia cousins became great slaveholders and slave breeders. The Massachusetts cousins became great slave traders and great Abolitionists. The North Carolina cousins became small cells of Unionism within a slaveholding state. The Pennsylvania cousins became Quakers and operators of the dramatic Underground Railroad.

Many of these ancestors of the 19th century had the vision of men who saw

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that a country cannot exist half-slave and half-free. They saw the abolition of slavery as the logical extension of the 18th century Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The record of that vision is scattered on historical markers by gullies and streams in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee, and up and down the southeastern coast. They knew of no other way to destroy the slave mart save through sword and fire and blood.

But they have left for me and my contemporaries of the 20th century the task of destroying the incidents of slavery—segregation, discrimination, and prejudice. The Civil War was an inadequate answer to the slavery issue. Families were hopelessly divided among themselves; brothers and cousins fought on opposite sides of the lines. Spiritual and psychic wounds still fester in the Southland. The virus of an understandable hatred, the hatred of a conquered and expropriated people, has spread to every corner of our country. Its tentacles will engulf us unless we reach the heart of the monster.

And so, with my feet rooted firmly in the moral precepts of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and all the preachments of humanitarian tradition throughout the history of man, I take my stand against the institution of segregation and all of its incidents. For segregation is a monster, dividing peoples, thwarting personalities, breeding civil wars. It must be rooted out of our national life. It must be replaced by individual codes of conduct and by federal and state laws which recognize and protect the individual. It must go during our life time.

But even while taking this stand, we must learn from the mistakes of our ancestors. Force is not the way. Bloodshed is not the answer. We deserve to go down

in history as the most bankrupt generation ever produced, if with the total cultural and spiritual resources of the globe at our disposal, we cannot fashion superior instruments to those of civil war, of riots, of personal retaliation, and of mass resentment. We must span the chasms of internecine strife. We must heal the wounds even while removing the cancerous growth. It can be done. It must be done.

For me the process means an individual revolution in my thinking. I must see each man or woman as the product of his biological and environmental background. The forces of history of which he may be totally unaware have helped to shape his attitudes. His immediate environmental experiences have moulded his conduct. A lyncher in Texas may become a liberal leader in California. Had he been born in Africa, Mr. Bilbo might have become a great protagonist for the freedom of colonial peoples. Had I been born in South America, I might have hated North Americans for their inconsistencies.

The evolutionary law of survival teaches me I must be an integrated personality. I cannot be rent asunder by harboring personal prejudices or racial resentments. I want to spend my time finding the common denominator of mankind, and prejudice or hatred is an emotional waste. I will not vent my hatred for stupid customs and laws upon the individuals or public officials who seek to impose such practices upon me. I seek to destroy an institution, a mores, a disease—not a people. I must look beyond the human factor to the cultural structure, even though it be expressed in human terms. With my eye on the institution, the individuals who shape and are shaped by this institution fall into proper perspective. By every cultural, spiritual, and psychological resource at my disposal I shall seek to destroy the institution of segregation.

I will not submit to segregation myself

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so long as I am able to speak out fearlessly against it, or so long as my physical strength endures. Where segregation laws exist, of whatever variety, I shall attack the constitutionality of those laws. Where confronted with these laws in person, I shall resist them. If the refusal to abide by segregation statutes means imprisonment, I shall choose prison. If it means death, I can say only that my brothers and cousins are facing death every day. If I am not ready to give my life yet, I will leave the South where I was born and reared and find some spot in regional exile where I may still attack again and again such laws and customs. If my country is finally conquered by a national tide of prejudice which makes it impossible for me to breathe a free air, I will leave my country and find a new asylum, in the best tradition of the pioneers who helped to found America. For me there can be no compromise with segregation and discrimination.

I do not intend to destroy segregation by physical force. That would entail human waste and would not gain my objectives. I hope to see it destroyed by a power greater than all the robot bombs and explosives of human creation—by a power of the spirit, an appeal to the intelligence of man, a laying hold of the crea-

tive and dynamic impulses within the minds of men. The great poets and prophets have heralded this method; Christ, Thoreau, and Gandhi have demonstrated it. I intend to do my part through the power of persuasion, by spiritual resistance, by the power of my pen, and by inviting the violence upon my own body. For what is life itself without the freedom to walk proudly before God and man and to glorify creation through the genius of self-expression?

I intend to destroy segregation by positive and embracing methods. When my brothers try to draw a circle to exclude me, I shall draw a larger circle to include them. Where they speak out for the privileges of a puny group, I shall shout for the rights of all mankind. I shall neither supplicate, threaten, nor cajole my country or her people. With humility but with pride I shall offer one small life, whether in foxhole or in wheatfield, for whatever it is worth, to fulfill the prophecy that all men are created equal.

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## DADDY

JADE SNOW WONG

IF WITH the words, "May I present my father?" I could conjure up his actual self, you would see before you a thin, tall, if slightly stooped Chinese, with graying hair, alert eyes in a faintly wrinkled face. He would flash a smile showing his perfect teeth, extend a work-scarred hand, be you woman, man, or child, and say with a slight Chinese accent, "How d'you do?" How well you would know him beyond such a meeting would depend upon how long your association with him, your nationality, your responsiveness—in other words, what you were.

If you were the jobber for his business, associated with him for some twenty-odd years, you would know him to be honest, responsible, the owner of a factory which turns out the best possible work for the lowest reasonable price. If you were a resident in San Francisco's Chinatown, you might point to his thirty-year-old firm and report him, erroneously, to be o-so-rich, the owner of much property. If you were one of my friends and had been a visitor in my home, you might mentally have classified him as "queer." If you were his friend or relative, you would know him as someone from whom you could always obtain help and sound advice, whether to straighten out your passport papers or to decipher a perplexing Chinese letter. If you were in the association drawing members from his home town, you would know his keenness and fearlessness in uncovering crooked practices. However, though you would see all these public qualities of industriousness, honesty, responsi-

bility, extreme individuality, resourcefulness, intelligence, and courage, you could never know those familiar qualities which I have come to associate with him, qualities learned in childhood and through later experiences which were peculiarly mine because he is my father, and because I was born his daughter rather than his son, his sixth child rather than his first, or the last, his eighth.

Almost forty years ago, he sailed across the Pacific from a peaceful Chinese southern town to raw and growing San Francisco. Just another one of twenty-four thousand Chinese who had been encouraged to immigration by reports of fabulous riches, he was by turns a cook, a book-keeper, a confectioner, a minister, and finally a manufacturer of overalls. Competition was keen; men often reasoned that if a competitor were eliminated, they would gain. No trick was too dirty to "do in" the other fellow. However, sewing overalls seemed to annoy no one particularly, and my father slowly accumulated capital to add one machine after another to his initial equipment in a little basement factory.

Through all these years, night school—sponsored by a mission—was his means of learning English. Night school sponsored by a mission also meant singing hymns and listening to sermons. So my father was converted to Christianity. He wrote his wife in China not to buy a slave girl, not to bind my sister's feet. Furthermore, he sent for her to come to the United States with their two infant daughters.

Hard work and stringent saving built up the business, always on a contract basis for some jobber, and though today it is by no means a match for large, modern manufacturing-wholesale establishments it is still many times bigger and better equipped than it was thirty years ago. I entered the world when the factory was a two-story affair. I remember the back half of both stories was reconstructed for use as family quarters. Living space in crowded Chinatown was at a premium then, as it is now, so the word "home" brings to my mind long cutting tables and roaring machines just as vividly as kitchen and bedrooms. Certainly I spent more time playing hide-and-seek in the best dark corners, talking to the working women, jumping on cars used for trundling overalls, and most of all, shadowing my father about his work, than in any back yard or sandpile.

As far back as I can remember, my oldest sisters were married and no longer at home. My older brother was at school all day. For a few years, then, while my younger sister was yet too young to get around, and I was not quite old enough to help with her bringing up, I was the only one to be a companion to my father when he was at home and about his work. Those hours were hardly spent in idle prattling. To this day, idle talk is abominable to him; silence is the safest rule at table. Then, because my four years did not yet represent acceptable kindergarten material, my father started me on Chinese ancient history—for in education he firmly believed. So, with some serious volume or other, I would follow him around the store. The Chinese method of learning means memorizing word for word. When he was bolting down a machine into place, I would be sing-singing about Wong-ti, the legendary first Chinese king. When he was operating a gleaming, wicked-looking cutting machine, I would be nervously perched alongside on a pile of material, screaming,

above the din, facts about when Wellington was a boy. (I memorized the Chinese version of Wellington's virtues at least ten years before I ever knew he defeated Napoleon.)

Upon that learning process today's progressive educators would certainly frown, but I wonder whether such discipline does not stand one in good stead, after all. I was never unhappy; Daddy said to memorize such and such for tomorrow, I had all day to learn it, and it was a duty unquestionably done.

Play, my father considered unconstructive, but that did not mean I had no fun experiences with him. Before the days of the Industrial Home Work Act, he was first in Chinatown to advocate industrial education for women, thus giving them the opportunity to supplement inadequate family incomes. He installed and kept in repair sewing machines in their homes, took stuff to them, and collected finished products. A bright red wheelbarrow which he trundled along streets and over cobblestone hills to transport goods was the special object of my affection. After he unloaded material, or before he picked up finished overalls, I derived infinite joy in jolting along in the empty wheelbarrow.

Whatever might have been Confucius' original ideas on the proper place of Chinese women, the practical result of Confucian teaching in China has made for both the seclusion of women within the home and their subjection to men (at least, up to the present war). My father was brought up in that tradition; Christian teaching may modify, but can never eradicate, deep-rooted Confucian ideals and ideas. Yet he was among the first, if not the first in Chinatown, to advocate and put into practice the right of women to work and to education. That is why he first took time to cart goods to women at home, day in and day out. That is why he taught his daughters Chinese every morn-

## DADDY

ing even when Chinatown's schools were accepting no girls. When asked why he so energetically "taught books" to his five daughters, he simply said, "You say it is wasteful to teach daughters who will marry and belong to other families, but if no one teaches his daughters, how can we expect to have intelligent mothers for our sons?"

The relationship between father and children in our family, as in most Chinese families, is of a very formal nature. I never think of cracking jokes with Daddy; Daddy really is not at all a "Daddy" sort of a person. There was a time when we called him by the Chinese equivalent of "Papa." But I remember one evening after dinner, some ten years ago, when he gravely announced to all assembled that he liked the sound of the title "Daddy," and that thereafter we should call him by that if we pleased. And so, although we children speak Chinese always with Daddy, we, at first carefully and now habitually, address him by the very American "Daddy."

I can never analyze him apart from the Confucian family ideal which has guided his decisions and actions as much as the Christian faith to which he has been converted. Confucianism and Christianity for him supply different answers to different problems and play complementary roles. Thus he quotes from the Bible that we should love our brothers and sisters, then adds the Confucian edict that the proper relationship between brothers is respect of the younger for the older. Respect we children always observe—for instance, by carefully calling an older sister "Second older sister," and never the familiar "Jade Lotus" which only those older than she can use. The practical result of the system is that the youngest in the family has no one with whom he can be familiar. Nothing is so effective in keeping this present adolescent quiet as to remind him that he

is the smallest; therefore he can say nothing impudent to anyone else; nor can he safely call anything his own.

It can be seen that there is little room for individuality in a Chinese family such as ours. We are early instructed that we must never bring disgrace to the family name, and that individual achievement is less significant than the resulting family glory. The individual claims significance largely from the family to which he belongs. For instance, in Chinatown, introductions usually are no sooner under way than one is asked (if one is young), "Who is your honorable father?" The Chinese attempt to submerge individuality leads to tremendous family conflict here in the United States. My adolescent years were exhaustively spent in trying to adjust a newly learned American cultural pattern to a rigid, established Chinese standard. It is revolutionary to hear one's college professor say, "Parents should *understand* their children instead of demanding unquestioning obedience." The statement sets off dynamite in one who suddenly realizes that *her* parents demanded just such obedience. Disaster results when adolescents return home and try to educate parents to this new idea. I have never tried to do exactly this with my father, for I am sure that he will never understand his children, though the goal of his whole life's work has unquestionably been their welfare.

The happiest adjustment in this conflict between individual expression versus parental control I have found to lie in expression outside the family circle, acquiescence within. Such adjustments have not been made without pain and tears, for other children of the family as well as myself. In all fairness to Daddy, I must say that if he demands respect, it is not because he is in any way egotistical, but because lack of respect for parents results in a confusion of proper relationship.

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Then too, he has the necessary quality of a person who *can* command respect. It may seem strange that the sort of upbringing he has given his children has not made them into "yes-yes" persons, lacking in decision. Probably we have inherited a strong dose of his independence of spirit and courage in experimentation.

Though discipline follows a general Chinese standard, Daddy's own brand is unique. He likes to give us the benefit of his teaching at or after dinner, when all receive scoldings started by the sins of one member. I am afraid that before I made my happy adjustment in individual expression I was most often the guilty one. There was always some main point to the sermons, however, and from each I carried away a souvenir; for Daddy would tear off a corner of the paper he had been reading, then write in square Chinese characters what some ancient sage had said concerning whatever was my current indiscretion. "Keep these," he always said, as he stamped on the date, "and someday you will unwrap them as precious pearls, and appreciate them." After half a dozen years, I am already realizing that those little slips are truly precious pearls. Just now, I picked out one at random; it is dated June 6, 1936, and the proverb expresses the utter scorn of some ancient sage for those who try by oral suasion to make a wrong appear right. Evidently I as a fourteen-year-old had been found guilty of that charge.

Life in the Wong family has been a rather serious business, but it has not been devoid of humor. There may not be a spontaneous, father-and-children joke-cracking type of fun, as I have said, but there is a subtle Chinese humor exchanged among us children. And Daddy himself, in spite of his general sternness and dignity, has the unexpected quality of being able to laugh at himself, as I learned for the first time last year.

We children decided we would buy him a new suit and hat for Father's Day. We also decided that this time we would help him choose the outfit. Heretofore we always prayed that, left to the tender mercies of some clever salesman, he would not return home delighting in a ghastly last year's wrong guess. So my younger sister and I marched downtown with him. We took him window-shopping, told him to pick out a store he liked. He decided that he would most certainly buy a suit which gave two pairs of trousers instead of one. We found a salesman, explained clearly to him that we wanted a *nice* suit. What size? We had not the faintest notion, nor had Daddy. The tape measure said a 36. "You'd better give him a bigger size; he likes clothes loose," we cautioned. On went a 38. The shoulders were fine, but the waist could not be buttoned. We looked at each other; we hadn't before noticed that Daddy was especially wide around his middle. Well, try a 40. The salesman, very sympathetic with our problem, tugged at the waistline again. The shoulders were now too wide, but what was the matter with the waist? "Turn around," he said, and we saw a big bulge in the back. Daddy came to suddenly. "My keys," he explained. And he unhooked a great bunch of jangling keys, about as many as one can hold with both hands—the keys to the associations to which he belongs, keys to the different rooms of the church, keys to both his factories, keys to his safes, all on one ring, together with a huge yellow bone whistle, whose function is to summon a policeman in case of robbery!

The salesman grinned. "Why don't you carry a trunk around with you?"

The vest stage was reached. There was nothing wrong with the fit. But Daddy ordered a deeper upper left-hand pocket, because he carried around in that one vest pocket, we discovered, a flashlight, two

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pencils, red and black, and two pens, one with red ink and the other with blue. Then he was in the fitting room, trying on the trousers, when we were startled by a very loud and obvious crash. We asked fearfully, when he came out smiling, what he had broken. "I dropped something," he answered simply, and held up a quite large monkey wrench! He always carried one around in case somebody wanted a machine fixed.

The salesmen tried to keep straight faces. We did not know whether to haw-haw heartily, or attempt to look graceful through everything. But the striking thing to me was that Daddy made no bones about it. He plainly laughed at himself, without the least embarrassment or annoyance. He recognized himself as peculiar if judged by American standards; he saw the joke, so why not enjoy the joke?

Yes, in American eyes, in the eyes of some of his friends, or even in the eyes of several of his children, he may be queer. Judged by the yardstick of economic achievement, he may even be a failure. Obviously, he has not much to show materially for a lifetime of hard work, for he has refused opportunities to make money when methods had to be underhand or ruthless. Money to him is only means to an end: the welfare of his children. When they are warm, sheltered, and fed, he is satisfied. But, judged by more searching

and understanding eyes which penetrate beyond the surface family frictions and conflicts, he is a magnificent character, acting unswervingly in what he considers traditionally sound principles. I do not for a minute doubt that in contributing services to his community, in bringing up his eight children to be good citizens and responsible human beings, and in enriching their lives by creating a family circle in which they are ever sure of a welcome, he has done as nobly as others who may offer to their children more material blessings.

I have never been in China. My Chinese heritage, which I hold so dear, has been transmitted to me almost solely by my father in the cultural pattern he has stamped upon me; singularly, how he imposed it does not seem to matter any more. And in the person of Daddy, I see epitomized all that is Chinese in my life, for in Chinatown, where so much is only pseudo-Chinese, he remains genuinely Chinese, through and through—keen, poised, dignified, unmoving, and commanding.

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## AN AMERICAN FENCE

MAURICE BISGYER

THIS is the story of a fence—a high wire fence that hems in people who stare out through it from the first “free port” of the world across the broad expanse of Lake Ontario and the rolling meadows of a free America.

From the moment one enters through the big gates of the fence at Fort Ontario, Oswego, to the moment of departure, he sees that fence all around him and he can't forget it. Nor do the thousand refugees inside forget it. They know fences. They have seen fences at Dachau, Buchenwald and, last but not least, notorious Fermonte in Italy. The Allies found many of them there and transferred them across the seas. These people were helped, but many hundreds of thousands of others never will be helped. The furnace at Lublin is their tragic memorial.

Anxious to see, on American soil, the first large group of men and women who escaped the Hitler terror at long last, I traveled to Oswego. As I entered the Fort and was stopped by the military guard, I had to overcome an inward rebellion at first sight of the fence and the innocents lined up beside it, who appeared to be kept under lock and key in the “free port.” That feeling was soon dispelled when I heard the laughter of children just inside the gate. The contrast between the adults and children was evident. The children bore no mark of the Hitler terror. They were busy at play, romping down a grassy slope and yelling gleefully. One family of nine brothers and sisters was pointed out to me. I lis-

tened to them talk among themselves. A little one was addressing his brother in Italian, who was answering him in German; another was talking French. The children, in their long trek across Europe, had picked up a smattering of various languages and were using the words as they came to mind. Yet they seemed to understand each other.

Standing near the fence were their elders. They approached visitors and, looking into their faces searchingly, each queried, “Belgrade? Zagreb? Vienna? Frankfurt? Warsaw? Salonika?” I couldn't get it until I was told they were reciting the names of their home towns in the hope of finding in the visitor a kinsman and engaging him in conversation. They still yearned for some familiar sound from home, even though it was no longer home to them. Yet they have all signed agreements to leave the United States after the war. Of their homes, sorrowfully shaking their heads, they said, “Nothing is left. Our homes are gone, our families are gone, everything is gone.”

The fence is not altogether a bad thing; it furnishes the means of expressing kindness. At the beginning, the townspeople of Oswego, seeing the strangers inside the fence and realizing they were lacking some of the niceties of life, would come and throw over the fence cartons of cigarettes, articles of clothing, and candy. These were the acts of good neighbors who were trying in their small way to remove the barrier.

Two romances among the young peo-



ple culminated in marriage. The director of the Camp, Joseph Smart, helped arrange the weddings, personally escorted the couples in his car, and acted almost like a parent. He has tried to remove the effect of the fence by making the place as homelike as possible. He has had the old wooden barracks renovated into family units consisting of one, two, or more rooms, depending on the size of the family. Each couple has a small living room in addition to the bedroom, with adequate bathing and toilet facilities. The residents themselves keep their places clean and attend to all housekeeping duties. Now they are permitted on occasion to go out through the gates of the fence to shop in Oswego.

A Greek restaurateur in Oswego used to come and look from the outside of the fence, and when he heard "Salonika" he was deeply moved. His restaurant soon became the headquarters for the collection of small sums—quarters and dollar bills, including his own money. Then he called on one of the camp officials and handed him \$300 "for the cause of the Greeks."

On the Sunday I was there, a reception, tendered to the townspeople of Oswego by the residents, did much to counteract the effect of the fence. Thousands of visitors—curious, friendly, helpful Americans—thronged the grounds and sat enthralled through a splendid performance given by refugee artists.

Also an important factor in breaking down any feeling of incarceration is the participation of the residents in running the camp. Mr. Smart, Mr. Marshall Stalley, and Miss Vera McCord of the camp staff, have conceived a democratic, self-governing council to make that fence appear as far away as possible. The council consists of ten members: two representatives from the major nationalities, and two from the smaller groups. The popu-

lation of the camp is a cross-section of 14 different nationalities.

To make themselves understood, the staff made a discovery of an excellent interpreter in a 14-year-old youth with a knowledge of five languages. I heard this remarkable boy translate an address into several languages on the spot. He has a unique record. When the Americans invaded Italy, he served the Engineers as an interpreter and was such a great favorite he was adopted by them. They gave him an army uniform (without insignia). Now he refuses to part with it for other clothes.

A coordinating committee, composed of representatives of national and local private agencies, has been established in the area to fill supplementary needs, including leisure-time, recreational, and religious activity.

The newcomers are eager to converse with visitors. They don't like to look back. They prefer to talk about what is happening around them. When I tried to question a group on their experiences abroad, they adroitly turned the conversation to questioning me: "Who do you think will win—Roosevelt or Dewey?" I almost expected the next query to be whether the Detroit Tigers or the St. Louis Browns were winning the American League baseball race. Most of these people have acquired what they call "substantial curriculum vitae" (biographies), for they were leaders in their home lands in their chosen vocations and professions. Among them are well-known opera singers, sculptors, stage designers, movie directors, painters, and physicians.

"How did you escape?" I asked another group. They whispered the answer in a chorus: "The Church—the Church." Many were befriended by Catholic and Protestant clergy. One man acknowledged in gratitude that the Italians of a small town knew he had false papers and

a changed name, yet never disclosed his identity to the Gestapo who were everywhere. In this day of poisonous "divide and hate" propaganda, it is good to set down on paper these simple facts.

A number were actively fighting the Nazis through the underground until they were caught. Others have sons in the United States and Allied armies. I just wonder how the corporal serving in the U.S. Air Corps felt when he saw his mother behind the fence on his recent visit to camp. There are other boys

in our armed forces who, too, must wonder.

Yet one feels that the good people of Oswego and nearby towns are breaking down the effect of the fence by their neighborliness and by their humanity. Their spirit may serve as an inspiration to others who so sorely need this example.

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## PEOPLE AND SYMBOLS

LOIS MARGARET HAMVAS

LAST Spring I was graduated from college. I find it easy to see now some of the things about college life I couldn't see at all while I was still there.

The town I had grown up in was small and quiet and well-bred, and people—at least those with whom I came in contact—never went around saying things like "those niggers" or "those wops." They were above such crudeness. Nor did they make any derogatory statements about the Jews. There was only one Jewish family in our neighborhood, and they were "Jewish, but very nice people." Everyone kept to his own little circle of society, and so never confronted any of the problems involved in mingling outside of it. Prejudices were so deep there was no need to proclaim them. There was no question whether Negroes should be accepted as other people, because Negroes weren't people.

It is impossible to get enough of a grip on this sort of thing to fight it. There is

no manifestation of prejudice, and you can't argue a thing that is never declared. If your teacher seats some of the darker-complexioned class members in the back of the room, you can't prove she has done it because of their skin color. Especially if she has never uttered a word against Negroes or Italians or anyone else. It is so subtle you are almost not aware of it at all. I grew up accepting it, not thinking of fighting it, because there was really nothing to fight.

The daughter of the Jewish family—her name was Hannah—had been my best friend when I was little. But something happened to our friendship. It went from being a "Come on over and play dolls with me" friendship to a "Drop in and see us some evening" kind. This happened so gradually I never knew how it came about. No one ever said I wasn't to play with Hannah. There were no such remarks as "How can you chum with a Jewish girl?" It was much more subtle

than that. It was, "Wouldn't you like to invite some of your friends from Sunday School instead? Maybe Hannah has to help her mother after school sometimes." And we ceased to be friends, but no one could ever say it was because of prejudice. It was simply that I had found other friends, as children will.

But at college Hannah and I sought each other out again just because we hadn't yet made any other friends and we were both lonesome. I found then that I still liked Hannah better than anyone else. When we were little, we had often gone to her house after school to sit on the porch and eat pumpernickel bread and kosher dill pickles, but at school we weren't served such things, so we went out to search the town to see what we could find. We came back with a good supply of pumpernickel bread and kosher dill pickles for guffing in the evening while we studied.

Hannah had a wonderful collection of classical records. She lived in a Co-operative House in an interesting little room under the eaves, which she had furnished herself, without curtains. Instead of curtains she had bought a recording of Beethoven's Ninth. I always went to her room to study so we could listen to records. So did some of the other girls in the Co-op, and we began to get acquainted with them. Most of them believed in the Co-op ideal of racial equality—not only equality but complete non-recognition of differences—and many were crusaders for the cause. They talked with us about it. Some had come to live in the Co-op not because of finances but because they didn't like the segregation elsewhere on Campus, because they really wanted to live in a house where girls of all races were accepted equally.

One night when Hannah and I were listening to the Sibelius First, one of the Negro girls in the house—a girl named

Barbara—poked her head in the door to inquire what we were playing. We told her and invited her to come in and listen. We offered her some of our bread and pickles. Not wanting to seem to lack cordiality, we put away the books we had been studying and talked to her: polite conversation, about the courses she was taking, how long she had been in college, where she came from, and things like that. We were flattered that she had gone out of her way to be friendly with us, and we wanted to do everything we could to be friendly in return. But we didn't quite know how to get beyond formalities, and soon she politely thanked us for letting her listen to our records and went off to her own room. We realized we hadn't succeeded in making her feel at home, and we were disappointed. We couldn't understand what was wrong.

We had done our best. What we did not realize was that we were assuming a difference between her and ourselves just by being so polite, by going so far out of our way to be friendly. When the white girls came into our room, we never bothered with formalities, we merely waved to them, told them to help themselves to the food and records, and went on with our studying. Conversations were never forced. When they started, they sprang up naturally out of whatever we were doing at the moment. "Hey, girls, listen to what this drippy author has to say about the effects of the French Revolution. I never heard such tripe!" No polite conversation about where we lived or what courses we were taking.

We wanted so much to be friendly with the colored girls that we invited them often up to Hannah's room. But it was a very self-conscious invitation, the kind the other girls in the house never got. We knew that we didn't have to go out of our way to be friendly with the white girls. If they wanted to come, they would

come. But we weren't so sure the colored girls would, and we were so anxious to make sure they knew we wanted them that we succeeded only in making everyone, both ourselves and them, feel a little uncomfortable. Those of us who were most anxious to be friendly were apt to be the worst offenders. The harder we tried to make the colored girls feel at home, the more we failed. The very trying caused the failure. We just didn't know how to accept colored girls casually, as we accepted white girls. And they sensed it and were polite, too, trying to respond, but the whole thing was too forced. We were trying to make friends instead of letting friendship come about naturally.

This was true not only in the house but outside of it. We would see Barbara across the street somewhere on Campus and call to her to come and have a Coke with us. We would walk to classes with her and invite her to go with us to the movies in the evening. We got to considering her one of our best friends. We really thought she was. We knew all the superficial things about her, that she was studying journalism and planning to work on the editorial staff of the Negro newspaper in her native city. Hannah and I had enough in common with her that we three might easily have become the close friends we appeared. If Hannah and I really were close friends, it was because we had completely forgotten that we were Jewish or not-Jewish. But we never could forget about Barbara. We were too busy being nice to her, being friendly with her, and even—just a little bit—showing ourselves off as her friend. We hoped to set an example to the Campus, to show everyone that no great calamity would befall us for having a close friend who was colored. But, unfortunately, we were much more conscious of that than we were of Barbara as a person.

And of course it was not only Barbara. There were others—particularly students from the International Center. We went out of our way to make "friends," but all of them were really only acquaintances, since we were interested in them more as curiosities than as people like ourselves. We gave them intellectual interest in place of the warm spontaneity of real friendship. We were in a way condescending to them rather than really accepting them. They were to us types, symbols of the Negro or the Chinese or the Russians or Italians. We had our prejudices and taboos, too, though they differed from those of other people. It was out of the question for us not to like one of these "friends," regardless of what we might think of him as a person. He wasn't to be judged by ordinary standards. Not to like him was a sign of prejudice. It was also out of the question to like anyone who was prejudiced, even though he might be nice enough in other ways. We weren't learning to be less conscious of color and complexion, but only to put them in a different light.

We imagined we had ceased to care what people thought of us, but actually we hadn't at all. Underneath we felt a sense of insecurity. We weren't sure what kind of impression we were making on our fellow-students by our choice of friends, and so we became aggressive about it. We had to stick out our tongues at the whole school, so to speak. We had to prove our point to them, not only because we believed it, but because we had to justify ourselves for believing it. We became acutely conscious of discriminations, and fought aggressively whenever we suspected their existence. We boycotted restaurants, criticized faculty members who didn't go all-out in our direction, and laughed much more loudly than was necessary at fellow-students who didn't agree with us.

## PEOPLE AND SYMBOLS

Our aggressive action did almost as much to create antagonism as to make converts. But we made our mistakes even more in the things we failed to do, the deeper understanding we failed to have, the friendships we didn't make because we hadn't time to be interested in the people we called our friends. And we sensed something of our failure. We saw we weren't necessarily proving anything to anyone by our efforts to set a good example. That prejudice is not subject to rationalization. That we could bring forth all the arguments of sociology and anthropology to prove to someone that a Negro is no different from himself except in skin color, and when we had finished he would say, "That may be true, but I still don't like a Negro." We were discouraged. Yet we didn't know in what way we were failing nor what we could do about it.

There were, of course, many Campus organizations—particularly the Co-ops—which were doing very worthwhile work as organizations. But, for the most part, it was individuals in their personal relationships with people of other races who faced these problems. Of course there were many who were very deeply and naturally democratic, who were never confronted by any such quandaries. But there

were also a good many of us who had to learn how to be democratic. That sounds like a boundless conceit, especially since our relationships with other peoples were basically founded on an assumption of superiority. But it was not intentional conceit. Many of us had been brought up in towns where, though racial superiority was not given lip-service and often was even rejected verbally, the entire social system was none-the-less founded on an assumption of superiority. It was bred in us very deeply, too deeply to be thrown off the moment we came in contact with different ideals. And so we did have to learn to be democratic, and the learning was not easy.

With me, as with many of the others, I suspect, it was not until after I was out of college that I could look back and see clearly where our failure lay, what a lot we had missed by not giving people more attention as people, as *individuals* rather than as symbols of a race.

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*Lois Margaret Hamvas has just left the University of Michigan, where she was studying creative writing under Professor Cowden, to be with her soldier husband in Missouri. This is her first published piece.*

## POETS OF WOOD AND WORD

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

COCKLEBURS migrated to the North country in the wool of sheep. Dandelion seed was brought in women's aprons. Wheat came in the lining of a hat or the seams of an old coat. Ideas still alive and persistent also migrated and have persisted, strengthened in the fibre of the human spirit in a way that has never been measured. One can only feel them out with a divining rod, a witch stick that indicates curious directions and deep streams.

Perhaps the strains of the mystic in labor and dreaming has in our country been most unrecorded. Yet our people in the middle border country had witch strains of melancholy, sudden relaxed gentleness in the large hands for evenings, twirks of curious gaminry, insights as long as the whip of the northern lights, long as the sun setting, reflecting like the winter mirages a far city and making the simple haycocks into inverted towers of mist.

There was Jacob—a cabinet maker, the village carpenter.

There are people today who can tell anything that Jacob built, the solid barns, the houses, grown into the soil like living trees. "Look at the chisel handles," he always said, "to see what kind of workman a man is." He could sharpen a saw from heel to point in graduated perfection. "Don't brush a colt's fur the wrong way," he would say, meaning that wood must be worked with the grain. "Plane with the grain, smooth, clean and fine."

When he came here from Austria he was frightened, seeing only a few ash trees on the long low sweep of the prairie. He had to get used to the woodcraft of the open fields, learn how to hang a gate against the wind, how to make roofs for the open spaces with strong king posts to hold against the storm, strong roof trusses, slopes, and splays, balanced and low to let the wind draw off. "Learn everything from a tree," he always said. "You don't have to have any other book but a tree. A tree will tell you all you need to know. It grows from the bottom with the greatest pressure there, dignity and ease between, then diminishes toward the top, where there is decoration if you want it."

Trees and space were the only books he could read.

All his life he handled the lathe, the center and the spiral bit, the brace, the ax, saw, claw hammer, small augers, mallet, gouges, gimlets, and the bradawl. In his tool box were also the chisel, the iron square, the rule. He has more monuments to his skill in the beauty and harbor of a snug house and the great burgeoning of a full barn than any man in the North. Other people made money, took it away, traveled far, amassed much. But Jacob was one of the builders. He had only his two hands, a level head, and his tools.

He made fine oak coffins. "It matters not how proud or rich a person may be," he always said. "He will get four planed boards under five feet of earth, the same as anyone." He made a fine coffin for himself and looked at it every day with pleas-



ure, thinking how one day he would at last be one with his beloved wood.

He wrote in wood, and his poetry still stands beyond flesh, against time.

There was the wagon-maker, Ole. He and his father came from Norway with forty dollars and an opinion on plows and how a wagon should be made.

The father had a blacksmith shop and made plows, using horsepower for grinding, the blindfolded horse moving around the grindstone amidst flying sparks. He was always studying to true the plow, perfect the balance between the point and the heel and the beam handles, wanting a perfect run of a plow, all handwork.

His son thought of nothing but strong oak axles, the balance and movement of a strong and beautiful wagon, to haul the corn and the wheat beginning to multiply in the fields. Every triviality of a wagon he studied, down to the little painted scrolls on the wagon body. His art and religion were the making of a strong, useful, enduring wagon.

Once he heard wagon men talking about saving money by alternating the spokes, a good one and a bad one, and this made him powerfully angry. None of that for the Norwegian workman. When you meet one of his wagons on the road, you say to this day, "What a good and fine looking wagon." A neighbor has saved through all these years a hub of one of the first of these wagons and the hub still says: "See how strong I am. See how durable and beautiful he made me."

Mr. Dibble is not in any history.

Like a delicate mark of fern in rock, or step of lost animal in glacial loess, we read a few letters written by him in a very neat hand. By reflection from the northern lights, or by a sod shanty fire, he writes to his father in New England, saying he would like to enjoy New Eng-

land apples and cider in the fall and the company of old friends again and the little fields of home. "Write a few lines, dear father, to keep intact the bonds of our affection. I cannot at present calculate when I will return."

Return, return, his feet beat out on untrodden prairies, O return never to the tiny house, the little fields, the grasping hands, and the tight skull. He walked always into the sun, canvassing the wilderness, neat as a pin, selling life insurance. He had to walk miles between customers. "If a man had a horse it would be rather pleasanter," he wrote, but he did not truly want a horse any more than he wanted to return.

He knew in his heart he would never return to the rocky fields, the condemning women, and the tiny fear. He could not get over the joy—the pure joy when he got up in the morning and saw the far horizon and the joyful springing light, and he grinned and hopped like a little New England rabbit to see the lavish woman earth where he could walk without gun or shock, along with geese and carrier pigeon, talking with sand hill philosophers and prairie chickens.

He knew in his heart he would never return to the girl to whom he wrote, "I am in excellent health, and did gain one pound a day. This is no place for lantern jaws or long lean frames. Here you have to have a wife, good looking, healthy, kind, and strong who can play the piano, sing, dance, talk Norwegian, harness a horse, ride bare back and go afoot."

He would never return to her, never return at all. He would chuckle softly walking alone, loping along the far ridges, looking, chuckling, with no desires but to love the country, see the haycocks, the new sod huts, the husking bees, and the rosy cheeked girls getting kissed by the frosty huskers, and more corn between the wagons than would grow in a New Eng-

land field. The prairie chickens would walk in the sumac chuckling back at him. "Yes," said Mr. Dibble, "everything is plentiful . . . plentiful. A man can walk for a week and not pass over more of a hill than is in the lower meadow at home and so much sky!"

"Wind at your back," said one letter, "and you keep on your feet and are propelled over eighteen miles of very fine prairie, not a bush nor a tree nor a house, just you and the wind."

In his walking he fell in with many people who asked him nothing, and put no fear into him. "The country is democratic," he wrote. "It is upright and outspoken." He rode with peddlers and gamblers, and helped old people file claims; he slept on fresh hay in sod huts with gay people like himself, growing with their roots lavishly in the new air.

Sleeping out in the open, that was one of the nicest things, and not washing in the morning, never getting used to sleeping in his clothes, peeking around to see if his mother might be looking. "It is nice," he writes cautiously, "to sleep in the open. You are always dressed, have plenty of room and air. It is nice."

And he would never return. He skipped away from the iron trap of the East, skipped merrily away from the old jaws. "Sometimes I think of it at night," he says. "I seem a mystery to myself, that I think I should have lived so long and known or cared so little for others. When I am walking over the country, then I am happy."

Once, much later, he saw and heard a tall rangy man from Illinois and felt great excitement for a moment catching a glimpse of a man big enough for the horizon, with a spirit sweet enough for the light.

He fled the old horizon of the heart and the head. "I enjoy going about very much but when I return to a room I feel

frightened alone. It is my worst hardship when I stop walking." But why stop walking? No mountain stopped you. No ocean ended the land. The sun kept going west and Mr. Dibble kept walking after it.

"This year I shall return." And every year he did not return. He kept tripping lightly, disappearing into the myriad activity of the new land. When his letters cease, he is moving toward the West, moving on with the partridges, the antelopes, and the little prairie dogs. "I will keep you informed," he writes, his voice disappearing, chuckling free. "I will keep you informed of my principal moves." A businesslike statement of disappearance and flight, a fine phrase to walk away behind into the rich warm folds of the voluptuous land.

Budd Reeves was born like a grasshopper from the dust and many years endurance.

It was at the time when the land was going to the devil, when North Dakota started to blow into Iowa. Budd built a low wagon and on it put a log cabin, which he said had developed not only manhood but nationhood. With his youngest son driving a span of mules, one gray and the other bay, with a dog of great size named Sparticus, he went forth from the Canadian border to St. Paul, a pilgrim, sent no word ahead, had neither gold nor silver nor brass in his purse. On the cabin door was his flag of the earth and a sign saying, "I am not a peddler. I am a missionary performing a ceremony."

His message, he said, came from Moses—Honor thy Father (God) and thy Mother (earth) that thy days may be long on the land.

He had a book to sell, written by himself, called *What I Think After Thinking*. He had been a farmer; and, thinking through lonely nights and days, worrying about the mortgage, he had come to some

conclusions: "There is little difference between a man who can only feed hogs and the hogs he feeds. That the man who takes a trip to the moon with a mortgage tied to both legs to pull him back is just as well off as though he spent all his time feeding hogs!"

Another of his pamphlets printed by himself was called *To Those Who Are Put: To Those Who Will Be Put and to Those Who Will Stay Put*. It was his theory that the best thinkers in the world are workers and farmers because they are put, had to stay put. At every bank failure, depression, flood, and famine, they could not pull up stakes and high-tail it to another place. "The man on the prairie, for instance," he writes, "has to stay put. The wind is howling. It is dangerous. He is lonesome. He cannot move. He has to stay. And that is the reason he is a most powerful man. He will begin to think about solving the light and heat question. He will find out that the drawback shaking his windows and blowing him to Kingdom Come can be used in a windmill. He will stay and wake up!"

This Blake of the prairies was at once humble in the affairs of man and arrogant in the power of the spirit. "I am the uncultivated soil, in which the seed has sprung up voluntarily. I am not the Big I. I am the small I. I have a slow and peculiar mind. I am the follower. I am not the leader. I cannot shake off the simple understanding of the frontier and the backwoods."

He got to thinking much about the giant Hauler, the new northwestern King, the strider-over-prairie-distances, James Jerome Hill. He saw Hill as James, the ruthless empire builder, and he saw him as Jerome, the prairie Saint of Hauling. He found himself watching over Hill "because he was a Hauler." It might seem ridiculous, he wrote, "this mighty man, a factor in world building and man build-

ing, a rich man, and me a poor man thinking about him in a certain way. The poor man can think things a rich man cannot. With a poor man the wind is always blowing both ways. I have always been in debt. I have been searching for light. He has been searching for gold. While Hill has been searching for passages, tunneling under, I was searching for the invisible. He is loaded with the world's goods, I am empty handed. He has everything to let go. I have let go everything."

While he was parked in St. Paul, his mules with their noses in a feed bag, whom should he see standing across the street but the state's chief, the visible James and the invisible Jerome! The rich man came over and entered the cabin of the poor man, and they spoke together, both agreeing on one thing: that the earth was being neglected and ruined. Hill said—The farmers are ignorant; they have eaten the pedigreed hogs from England I gave them. Budd said—Let me try. Hill said—You can try. I will give you free run of my trains for three days.

So the poor man rode free on the Hauler's great and many trains. He saw many people, dirt farmers, professors, grain merchants, and succeeded in calling an interstate grain growers' convention. The rich man and the poor man sat in the hall together planning how to save the land, and the poor man worried about the rich man, the Hauler Hill. He thought: "Thus far he has laid a few rails and built a few lines on the great ball of earth and is carrying around a few people. I don't say he is going to connect future worlds with his railroad, but I do say that through him will be seen the shadow of worlds beyond."

There came a time when many attacked Hill, the ruthless James. Budd sat downtown in St. Paul, worrying and grieving. He sat down in a hotel and began writing a letter to Hill telling him how

## COMMON GROUND

he must become Jerome the Hauler, the Saint—not James, the waterer of stock, the cinch worm, the locust. When he had finished, he rolled it up like a scroll, walked up toward the feudal stone house of the Hauler in the early morning, and knocked on the rich man's door, saying to himself: "If Lazarus sees me now, I wonder if he will say, there goes another fool to the house of Dives." A servant answered the door, and he handed her the scroll and went back to await word. None came that day, so the next morning he went to Hill's office down by the river and stood around, but as no one spoke or summoned him he went away.

He speaks best for himself. He lived to a great old age, writing his books, publishing and selling them himself. He saw the world in man, in labor, and in growth. He saw the earth glad because of the growth and energy in man.

"My belief," he writes, "is that the growth and spread of man over the earth is bringing to light truth. The earth is glad of man. God has made but one man and that man is still alive and growing and will never die. He is spread over the eternal past and will continue to spread over the eternal future. . . . Man's growth and spread delights the earth. The earth will grow with her son, Man. . . . Anything

in reference to the future of man should not be a surprise. Some people have long faces. Things will be destroyed, they say. But when the pine is used up there is enough clay to build skyscrapers; when the clay is gone there is enough sand to build cities that will never die."

And again, "There must be more work than talking to accomplish anything. It is necessary to do a lot of hard work to connect man with the world and the world with man. . . . Everything is in man, and the future is in him illimitable. The dark and sightless end of him points down to his mother, the earth, the light and illumined end of him points up to his father, God, and he can read from darkness and build from shadows."

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*Meridel Le Sueur's work has appeared frequently in O'Brien's Best Short Stories of the Year, and in other collections. She is now working under a regional writing grant from the University of Minnesota on an historical novel of Minnesota prior to the Civil War. "Poets of Wood and Word" is an excerpt from Miss Le Sueur's book, The North Star Country, to be published next spring under the Duell, Sloan, and Pearce imprint as one of its American Folkways Series under the general editorship of Erskine Caldwell.*

## WARRIOR RETURNING

JUANITA PLATERO AND  
SIYOWIN MILLER

WE WERE driving home to Little Canyon, that day in early summer, my husband Hoshkey and I and our two small girls, Rosita and Toni. That we were passing just as Decidero got off the bus was coincidence. Hosh was slowing for our turn-off at the signpost, LITTLE CANYON DAYSCHOOL—8 MILES, when we saw the bus in the distance where the highway from Laguna rounds the tall red rocks.

"White dog, white dog," Rosita and Toni began to chant in Navajo from the back seat. That's what Hoshkey's people call the Greyhound buses—white dog. "Wait, Daddy, wait. Let's watch it!"

So Hosh brought the station wagon to a stop across the iron-railed cattleguard and we sat there waiting. It was a warm day and the sun on the pastureland made bright patterns of the young green against red earth. The desert wind shook the stalks of the late-blooming yucca and tossed the dusty green branches of the stunted junipers. There were cloud shadows across the yellow face of Sheepherder's Mesa.

When the bus began to slow as it approached, the girls jumped around with excitement in the back seat. When it stopped, splashing gravel across the highway, they were silent, watching. Then they fairly shouted, "It's Decidero! Here comes Decidero!"

As Decidero crossed the highway, I noticed the good fit of the khaki uniform to his lean muscular body. He came toward us and his shoulders seemed broader

than I remembered, his Navajo slouch gone.

"Halahni, cousin," Hosh greeted him. "The war is over?"

"Halahni." Decidero's teeth flashed white between thin firm lips. He smiled as though, all in one moment, he felt the warmth of the sunshine and the warmth in Hoshkey's voice and thought it was good to be joked with by one's cousin; it was good to be home with mesas and hawks and sunshine.

Decidero looked at me. "Hello, Ruth." The clean-lined face seemed more rounded; his long straight nose and high cheek bones seemed less angular because of a few extra pounds the Army had added to his weight. "Where have you been?"

"To town," Hosh answered, half-turning his head toward Albuquerque in a gesture which was his compromise with the old Navajo custom of pointing with the lips. "We took the Pinkertons to the train. Their vacation starts today."

Pinkerton was the government man, farming and stock adviser, appointed to our district. Mrs. Pinkerton was head of the Dayschool, and Hosh and I were general factotum assistants.

Decidero walked around the car to get in beside me. He paused first to touch hands—his palm to mine, fingers scarcely clasping. (The Army had not altered that Navajo handshake.) It was then I noticed the brooding in his eyes, like thunderheads piling above the mesas before a summer storm.

Hosh drove slowly up the narrow wa-

gon road. "For how long is your furlough? And after this, do you go across?"

Rosita and Toni were swarming over Decidero, examining the insignia on the sleeve of his blouse, asking to try on his cap. Decidero was a favorite cousin. So often, before he was drafted, he had come to our quarters at the Dayschool, sometimes bringing his young wife, and we had dinner together and sat talking around the fireplace afterward. Decidero liked to help Hosh about the Dayschool, repairing equipment for the playground, running errands, driving after water from the spring to fill the storage tank behind the kitchen. Decidero helped at the Dayschool, but his family would send none of the children to the classes. They viewed the Dayschool with suspicion even though Hosh worked there. They were what Hosh called "long-hairs"—Decidero's family.

"When did you last see my wife?" Decidero asked me.

"When your family sent for Hosh to write a letter for them," I said. But I didn't tell him that we understated some of the things they wanted written, being shorthanded with the sheep, planting the corn late, so much work because he was not there to help.

"How is she feeling?" Eagerness shone in his eyes and a little smile warmed his mouth.

"She looked fine. You may get to see your son before you go back to camp."

"You think it will be a son?"

"Undoubtedly," I answered. (Had I ever seen the Navajo who didn't want a son?)

"Are you still with the same outfit in California?" Hosh asked.

"Yes, and I thought California was a sunny place! That camp where I was training was wet all the time. When it wasn't raining, there was fog. Maybe once, I saw the sun." As he talked, his eyes were

on the rock ledges which guarded the road for a way and then cut across the pastureland, ledges of rock, warm-colored in the sunshine. He looked ahead to where Blue Clay Gap was outlined sharply in the western chain of mesas.

But it wasn't until he looked back over his shoulder at Butterfly Mountain that I knew suddenly how terribly homesick he had been. Decidero had not been away from Little Canyon as often as Hosh—just a few winters at boarding school. I began to understand what coming home must mean to him, coming home and knowing he must leave again.

Toni was taking Decidero's cap to balance jauntily over her right eye. Hosh noticed his cousin's close-cropped hair and smiled. "That haircut they give you in the Army will last a long time."

Decidero laughed and ran brown fingers through the thick short hair. "That's all right, my cousin with side-burns like Mexican Juan; I'll bet I can outshoot you now." With one finger he flecked the marksmanship medals on his blouse.

Hosh shifted the car into second for the grade ahead. On the hill, before the road turned downward, all of Little Canyon was before us. To the west, red mesas rising above Cottonwood Spring. Eastward, the formations of brown and yellow rock marked by sheep trails which led to the wild hay of Apache Wash. And ahead, the wagon road crossing the arroyo grown with chamiso and green plumes of tamarisk, the road leading to the low stone buildings of the Dayschool, past young trees which cast their meager shade upon Mexican-Juan's adobe trading post.

There were earth-colored hogahns in the distance, scarcely visible—red against red sandstone mesas, brown against a sloping brown hill—hogahns flanked by the green of new-cut piñon and juniper framing summer shelters. And massed in



## WARRIOR RETURNING

broken outline against the north sky was the great dark-looming mesa, Dez Jin.

Decidero's brooding eyes were on the little canyons beyond Dez Jin where his people lived, when he asked, "For how long is Pinkerton away?"

Hoshkey countered, grinning, "Why do you care? You aren't heading for the back country, are you?" Among the Navajos, cousins seem to have a special license to kid each other. Hosh said afterward that he was only joking.

But Decidero did not answer.

There was the tension of sudden silence.

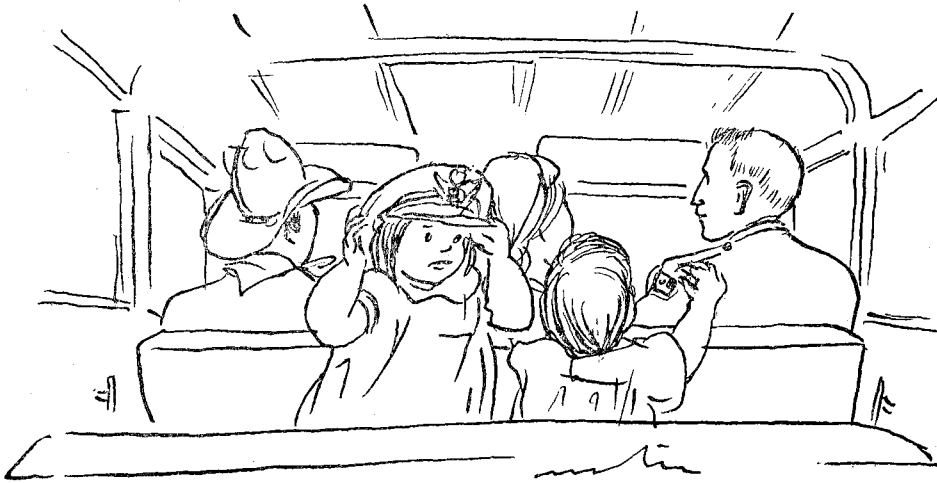
I didn't look at them. I kept my eyes on the little canyons, blue and mysterious with distance. Hosh had told me how when he was little he herded sheep

without looking at Decidero that his thoughts were of how he too could hide in those canyons. And Hoshkey seemed to know what he was thinking.

The silence was shattered by the laughter of the girls as a long-eared jackrabbit went hop-hopping over rocks, dodging cactus clumps. Vaguely I noticed when an old man turned from one of the trails onto the wagon road and started walking toward the trader's.

Hoshkey spoke as though to disprove what the silence told him. "It is temptation to over-stay your leave to see that son of yours. I would feel the same." His tone implied: but you really don't intend to.

They were both staring ahead at the road. Hoshkey's dark eyes were troubled.



there beyond Dez Jin. There were canyons where the cliff dwellings of the ancients were high in the red rock walls above tall grasses, canyons where only sheep trails marked the steep rock walls, canyons where there were no trails. Some of the Navajos hid there when Kit Carson's men were rounding them up at the time the whole tribe was sent on the "long walk" to Bosque Redondo. I knew

There was a sternness to the sharp cheek bones and the jutting of his chin now that the warmth of laughter was gone from his mouth. The brooding seemed to spread from Decidero's eyes to his whole face.

He said finally, "Cousin, I don't guess I'll be going back."

I pretended to be watching two drab-bodied planes coming from the southeast,

Albuquerque, circling over the western mesas before flying north and east, heading for the bombing range between Little Canyon and the Rio Puerco. I tried not to hear Hosh tell Decidero that hiding out from Washeengtone was not a healthy thing to do; that his desertion would not be forgotten even if the war were over in a month; Washeengtone would still search for him. From habit, Hosh used the term "Washeengtone," which among the Navajos had come to mean the President, the Army, or anything connected with the government in Washington.

And Decidero answered back, "Washeengtone is too busy to look for one lost Navajo."

Hoshkey tried another argument. "You owe it to Washeengtone to fight when you are needed. Didn't Washeengtone send you to school? Don't your wife and mother get money from Washeengtone now that you're away from home?"

"I've thought of all that." Decidero's voice was low, as though he answered from a dream. "Only this place seems important, Cousin. This is what I want most—to be here, to see our sheep moving across the green land, to drive our horses to water at the hidden spring, to plant corn again, and beans and squash in the field along the arroyo."

Who could understand better than Hoshkey? Who could love Little Canyon better than Hosh? He slowed the car as he approached the old man I had seen walking toward the trader's. It was Juarito, signaling for a ride.

Hosh might have said more to convince Decidero if he'd had more time with him. But Juarito got into the back seat, and Decidero turned to greet him. Juarito was a respected Medicine Man in Little Canyon, and almost as old as Decidero's grandfather. As we drove the few remaining miles to the Dayschool, he asked Decidero many questions. He was

interested in this war. What Mexican-Juan, the trader, told him in Spanish, he could not always understand. Sometimes he came to our place to look at maps and the pictures in magazines of tanks and submarines and listened carefully while Hosh tried to explain to him the new machines of destruction, for which there were no words in Navajo.

But here was Decidero, someone in the Army, someone who saw these things used for fighting. He fingered the insignia on Decidero's blouse, the tiger crushing a tank in its mouth.

Decidero looked to Hosh, at first, for help in using the right words to give this Medicine Man an adequate picture. Then he launched into a description based on the caterpillar tractor which Washeengtone had sent to work on the Dayschool road. As Decidero spoke of machines which go through sand and across arroyos where there are no bridges, I could see he was enjoying it. There was the play of excitement, new in his eyes, as he talked about the war to old Juarito. I remembered what Hosh had once told me—how a young man would give his best horse for a chance to explain anything to the Old Ones and have them listen.

We left Juarito at the trader's. Hosh told Decidero he would take him on beyond Dez Jin. It was a long way to walk; he wouldn't get home before dark.

"Thank you, Cousin," Decidero evaded him, "but it is not too long by horse. I will borrow old Pete from you and send him back next time any of the family comes this way."

Decidero had saddled Pete and led him from the corral, when Hosh and I walked toward our stone house adjoining the Dayschool. "If I could have talked to him more, maybe he would have listened," Hosh said. "He isn't too sure about not going back. But once he gets

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home with those long-hairs—" He left the sentence unfinished.

I knew what he meant. Decidero's family would agree with his plan to desert; they would encourage him. Here in Little Canyon the Army would seem far away, impotent with distance. There was the new baby coming. For a while Decidero's wife would be occupied with caring for it; she would not help with the work as much as usual. Already the family was shorthanded with the animals and in the field by the arroyo. These things would seem primarily important. Decidero's commitment to the Army would have little meaning compared to the family's need for help. And nothing in the experience of the family could make them understand the seriousness of desertion.

Decidero turned in the saddle, signaling goodbye, and then there was the clatter of Pete's hoofs as he took the cut across the rock ledges beyond the Day-school.

"After he's home a few days, after the sharp edge is gone from this homesickness," I asked, "won't Decidero, himself, see how foolish it would be to try to hide from the Army?"

We were at the flagstone steps. The girls were already inside with Lupe, Hoshkey's younger sister. We could hear their voices and the rattle of plates as Lupe put dinner on the table for us. Hosh stopped with one hand on the door. "Decidero could hide a long time in those canyons and he knows it. He could stay right at his mother's hogahn until strangers appeared on the road around Dez Jin. There's no other way into those canyons, and, after that, there are a hundred places where he would be safe. He-Who-Seeks-War's relatives, herding sheep in there, would see that he got food, water from the springs. It might be a long hunt for the Army."

"But wouldn't the Army ask for a

guide?" I stopped, realizing what Hosh must already be thinking. The guide would be Hosh. Pinkerton would certainly suggest him. What other Navajo, left in Little Canyon, spoke enough English, knew the country as Hosh? I saw unhappiness like a cloud shadow across Hoshkey's long dark eyes and across the firm, sensitive line of his mouth. I turned from him to the soft plumes of tamarisk we'd planted in our dooryard.

I heard him say, "Things are good now in Little Canyon. Most of the people use the Dayschool. They feel the government is helping them now and they are satisfied. I don't know how they would feel if men from the Army came here hunting some one of us." He paused and then said decisively, "Decidero is wrong in what he is doing. But I cannot bear to think of having to help the Army hunt him down."

We were walking through the door, toward the kitchen, smelling the dinner Lupe had cooked for us, mutton stew with chili, slapped-again-bread. We could hear the coffee boiling, smell the sweet aroma. But we were not hungry.

We didn't talk much at dinner. The girls told Lupe about the trip to Albuquerque (for them a trip to town was an occasion). Slender, good-natured Lupe listened with proper interest, raising her eyebrows high above dark eyes at the proper times. When the girls subsided for a moment, she ventured a few questions about Decidero through her brother's silence.

Before the meal was over, Hoshkey pushed back his plate and took the Coleman lamp from the shelf above the stove, lighting it. The glow was soft against the walls of the hall as he carried the lamp into the living room. I heard the door close and knew there would be no after-dinner romp with the children this evening.

Lupe turned up the kitchen lamp and hung it from its hook. She brought the dishpan of water which had been heating on the stove. She smiled at me but made no attempt at conversation; my brown-eyed sister-in-law was a respecter of another person's thoughts.

Hosh should have taken a job as silver-smith or a mechanic's job at a garage in Albuquerque, I thought. He should have taken anything but this job at the Dayschool, hoping to help his people—this job which would send him into the back country to hunt down his cousin. And yet there must be some way to stop Decidero—some way to stop this disaster which his desertion was sure to bring.

Rosita climbed into a chair by the cupboard to put away the dishes I was drying. Toni busied herself sorting silverware into the drawer. Lupe must have heard the sound as I did, for she raised her face to the open window. Together we listened to the beat of hoofs in the cut beyond the Dayschool, the beat of hoofs across the schoolyard to our door.

It was Decidero's young brother in the doorway. I called to Lupe. The boy's words were coming too fast for me to follow. Hoshkey came from the living room in time to hear that Decidero's wife thought the baby would be born that night. Decidero's mother wanted us to bring old Seraphina.

Lupe went back to finish the work in the kitchen. She began, matter-of-factly, to talk to the girls about baths and going to bed. She was accustomed to our sudden departures to take a sick person to the hospital, to get a midwife if one lived far away and hadn't been called in plenty of time.

Seraphina's hogahn was beyond Cottonwood Spring. The evening light was almost gone from the sky when Hosh stopped the car before the empty hogahn.

Seraphina chirped like a bird disturbed in its sleep when Hoshkey called to her in the summer shelter. In a few minutes she was climbing into the station wagon beside me, settling herself for the ride, smoothing the pendleton about her shoulders. I had my pendleton blanket, too, folded across my knees. Hosh had told me to take it, that the hours before morning would be cold; so I knew we would be staying for the Hozhoji, the singing of blessing songs, until the baby was born.

Seraphina was a small dried-up bit of an old woman, a clan relative of Hoshkey's. Her eyes were small and bright like beads in her wrinkle-puckered face. She had a few stubs of teeth, evident when she talked—and that was often, for she loved nothing better than to relay bits of news and gossip. She tilted her head to one side as Hosh told her Decidero was home on furlough. Then she chuckled. "He comes home a warrior with something to talk about. Now maybe someone will listen." She addressed Hoshkey. "Remember the time he was first home from school? There was a meeting in the Chapter House and the Old Ones were talking about whether or not a Dayschool would be a good thing to have here?"

"I don't remember that, Grandmother," Hosh told her. "We were in Crown Point then."

I knew Seraphina was delighted he didn't remember. She chuckled again and seemed to hug herself beneath the pendleton as she told him the rest of the story: how while the Old Ones were still discussing the Dayschool, Decidero got up to talk for it. He had been to school. He knew about schools. He-Who-Seeks-War pulled him down saying he was only a schoolboy—he was not old enough to talk like that.

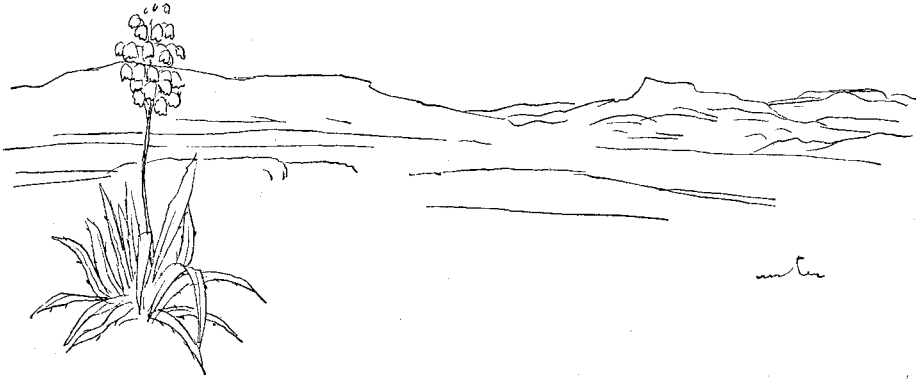
Seraphina's story was in keeping with some of the things I remembered about Decidero. He had a swagger, a desire to

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be seen and heard to advantage. The other young men in Little Canyon worked to make impressions, too, like impressing Mexican-Juan before asking for credit at his store, or impressing a young girl and that girl's family; but Decidero worked

down, beside the square stone storehouses and several horses inside the corral. Already relatives were arriving for the *Hozhoji*.

"That looks like Juarito's blaze-face in the corral," Hosh said as we got out



just a little harder. It was never unpleasant or troublesome, Decidero's desire to be seen and heard: it was just Decidero being young and a little vain.

We were on the grass-grown wagon trail to Decidero's mother's hogahn when a night plane for Albuquerque came over. I saw the red and green wing lights over the mesas before the sound of the motors reverberated like the roar of flood waters in the little canyons.

Old Seraphina murmured, "Eeeee-yah!" and ducked her gray head beneath her pendleton.

Hosh chided her. "Grandmother, surely you have heard a plane before."

Seraphina came up giggling. "But these big' ones since the war—so much noise, I think always they are coming down right here." She held her hands protectively over her head.

Hosh turned the station wagon from the ruts of the trail and pulled up beside the corral of cedar posts strung with barbed wire. Before he switched off the car lights, I could see the wagons, tongues

of the car. "Decidero's mother must have sent for him."

Already Seraphina was ahead of us, hitching her pendleton about her shoulders, walking toward the dome-shaped hogahn, her long full skirts swaying.

The weathered wooden door of the hogahn hung open, and we could glimpse the thin yellow flames of the center fire. The night wind was beginning to blow cold. The fire was blotted from view as two full-skirted figures emerged from the doorway. One was Decidero's mother; the heavy one beside her was his young wife. They paused to greet us, Decidero's wife smiling a tight smile with pain-stiffened lips, and then they began to walk—a measured intent walk around the hogahn to hurry the process of birth.

A train whistled in the distance, answered by yelping coyotes in Apache Wash as Hosh stooped for the low doorway of the hogahn and I followed him inside.

The scene was the same as other *Hozhojis* we'd attended. Only the faces of

relatives who came to help with the singing were different: women sitting on the women's side of the hogahn, long earth-smudged skirts tucked about them, pendletons falling loosely from their shoulders disclosing worn velveteen blouses; pendletons spread over the children lying on sheep pelts against the hogahn wall, children asleep, children pulled up on elbows, sober brown eyes watching; men in levis and the faded brightness of colored shirts, leaning their shoulders against the rounded rock in the circular wall which supported the earth-chinked logs interlocking into the dome overhead, men with their moccasined feet firm against the earth floor of the hogahn, men with their long hair drawn back from the forehead and tied into a sterner version of the queue worn by the women.

Most of Decidero's near relatives were long-haired in both meanings of the word—families who often talked of the “good old days” when the Americans were not so numerous.

Juarito sat beyond the fire. He nodded to us. As we walked around the fire, I was conscious of the familiar smells, raw earth and stale mutton grease and wood smoke clinging to the blankets of the relatives, and the fragrance of piñon wood in the smoke rising toward the smoke hole from the center fire.

We walked toward the back of the hogahn to the old man sitting on the far curve of the north wall, He-Who-Seeks-War, Decidero's own grandfather. Hosh and I always gave him our attention and respect; he was one of the few old warriors left.

Hosh touched hands and sat down beside him, taking a pack of cigarettes from his pocket. I touched hands with the old warrior, looking for a moment into the dimmed brown eyes under the jutting unruly brows. Tolerance was there for me, an American, only because I was

Hoshkey's wife. Age had stamped fierceness indelibly on his stern warrior's face, and the severity was increased by the old-time hairdress. When I turned from him, I walked behind Juarito to where two women relatives who sometimes came to the Dayschool were making a place for me.

Hosh was knocking the cigarettes against one knee and offering them to He-Who-Seeks-War. The old man bent his head, the loops of turquoise swinging from his ears with the movement. Hosh cupped a match for him with long brown fingers. The old warrior drew with pleasure on the cigarette, leather-brown cheeks flat, smoke curling thinly over wrinkle-etched lips.

Then I noticed Decidero sitting against the wall. I'd missed seeing him because he wasn't in uniform. He'd changed to levis and colored shirt, and he wore a battered, wide-brimmed hat.

Decidero's wife came into the hogahn. Seraphina helped her kneel upon the pile of sheep pelts, smoothed her skirts about her widespread knees. She adjusted the woven belt suspended from the ceiling logs, and knotted one end for Decidero's wife to grasp. Round-eyed, Decidero's wife looked uncertain and very young as she listened to words of instruction from Seraphina. She bit her lips to hold them soundless. Her heavy black hair was beginning to loosen from the white wool cords which bound it.

I wondered if tonight this young wife wished she and Decidero had stayed with her people, as was custom, instead of coming to Little Canyon because her husband had good land here and his family needed help with the large flock of sheep.

Juarito got to his feet before Decidero's wife and began to chant: one voice thin and alone, gradually joined by others. Decidero added his voice to the chant as



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did Hoshkey. Juarito swayed a little in rhythm with the chant, extending both hands toward Decidero's wife. In his hands were eagle feathers. The wrinkled levis and the faded purple shirt did not take from the dignity of Juarito: there was power in his face and increasingly in his voice.

The young woman's eyes lifted to the Medicine Man's face, wavered, then fixed themselves on the eagle feathers. The small moans which escaped her lips were lost against the words of the chant. Decidero's mother and old Seraphina placed their hands against her waist and began pressing downward as though to push the child from her body.

One lost all sense of time. The chant rolled on endlessly. There were pauses when Decidero's wife rested; those who had been singing relaxed and made conversation. Hosh and He-Who-Seeks-War talked together, and then the chant began again. Once there was the drone of airplane motors overhead and Seraphina paused in her ministrations and looked upward.

The chant rose to insistent rhythm. One's ears pounded with it. It drove all individual thought before it. It continued as though each relative put all his thought and strength behind the words of blessing, and the strength became a tangible thing. Decidero's wife needed only to reach out and take of it.

Then, gradually, the volume diminished . . . one voice . . . and then another . . . until Juarito's voice trailed off alone and there was silence.

The baby was not yet born. Decidero's wife leaned heavily against her mother-in-law as she started outside the hogahn to walk again. Her face was tear-stained, and Decidero's mother spoke words of comfort.

Seraphina straightened the pile of sheep pelts and sat back to wait. She plucked

at her skirt with brown claw-like fingers, and then smoothed it. Her puckered old face was intent as she listened to snatches of another's conversation. She watched Hosh light another cigarette for He-Who-Seeks-War. "Tobacco is such comfort to the Old Ones," she said meaningfully. Hosh tossed the remainder of the pack across the hogahn to her and was rewarded with a stub-toothed grin.

Decidero's wife was gone a long time. Talk drifted like smoke on a wind-quiet day, and then the conversation centered upon the war.

Hoshkey's voice rose above the others. He did not usually talk when we attended a gathering where there were long-hairs. He listened. That way he knew more



about what they thought, and it was easier to get along with them. But this night he was not listening. He spoke to Decidero, but his voice was strong enough for the others to hear plainly.

"Cousin, I've been talking to our grandfather here, telling him about the design you wear on your uniform sleeve, like the old warriors painted designs on their war-shields. But I cannot explain the design to him. Will you show him?"

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Decidero looked at Hosh for a moment in surprise.

He stood hesitating, a little embarrassed, wondering why Hosh should ask him to explain a thing Hosh could so easily have explained himself. He shrugged and walked to the crosspole over which the family's clothing hung, moved a bright pendleton, and brought the khaki blouse from underneath.

Hoshkey's eyes were on the blouse as Decidero displayed the insignia. Hosh spoke to He-Who-Seeks-War, and his voice strengthened as though he deliberately sought to attract attention. A smile touched his lips as Decidero's long-haired relatives began to move closer to hear about this war design.

Hosh was fingering the markmanship medals as he said, "The way my cousin is learning to fight would make the old warriors proud. Tell them, Cousin, about the commando training given the men in the Tank Destroyer Corps."

Still embarrassed by the suddenness with which attention had been forced upon him, Decidero began to smooth the raised insignia with his fingers as he told about the rigorous commando training. He described the scaling of walls and swinging hand-over-hand along poles and ropes. His embarrassment was short-lived: he plunged eagerly into detailed description of how he had learned to stalk the enemy, overpower him from behind, and kill him noiselessly, quickly.

Juarito was impressed. He interrupted. "Maybe you could sneak along the rock ledges as your grandfather and I did to drag Apache look-outs from their horses before they could warn the others."

It was a thing to see—the shining in Decidero's eyes as he talked and his relatives listened. Not every man could be the center of attention while his wife was having a baby. He did not throw his blouse back over the crosspole, but wore

it across his shoulders proudly as they asked questions and he answered.

"One thing," a long-haired relative was saying, "one thing I do not understand. Of course it is good what you are learning, but why do the Americans expect us to send our men with theirs to fight across the water?"

"Yes, the Americans have taken the young ones," Seraphina put in, "young ones who are worth something to us. And they are sending them far away. But they leave Naswood, the drunken one who beats his wife and causes trouble at Chapter meetings, and they leave He-Who-Changes to sit around and string beads and gossip with the women."

Question piled upon question. Who here was not short-handed because of men away in the service? Who knew where their sons were, what they were doing, unless Hosh wrote letters for them and read letters to them? Old Seraphina subsided like a billowing skirt when the breeze is gone. From the conversation she had started, it was evident that there was no one here who would challenge Decidero's decision to desert the American Army: no one here who would not help him if he needed help.

Hoshkey said quietly, "It's just that we should help Washeengtone now. Washeengtone has been trying to help us these few years: building the Dayschool and drilling wells for water, trying to buy the Spanish ranch to the north so we'll have more grazing land for our sheep."

But Hoshkey's words only started the relatives on another phase of the subject.

"I do not always understand Washeengtone." Juarito fingered his drooping mustache. "There were years when they had us kill our sheep to save the grass. The trader said the Americans, too, killed sheep and pigs and cattle because there were too many. Now the trader says the Americans do not have enough meat."

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Old He-Who-Seeks-War began to shake his head slowly. "I do not understand Washeengtone either. I do not even understand why the Americans are fighting these people across the water." He turned to Decidero. "Do you know why, my warrior grandson?"

Decidero drew his feet under him and leaned forward to stare at the hard-packed earth around the center fire as though trying hard to remember. He seemed to be tense with the silence about him as the serious dark faces turned toward him, men and women waiting, listening for his answer. What young man would not have given two good horses for that moment?

He began to draw on the floor with his pocket knife—circles and uneven oblongs—little islands. He looked up at Hosh. "How can I make them see the Japs and Germans together?"

"The enemy," Hosh prompted, and a smile began in his eyes.

"Of course," Decidero agreed, "the enemy! The enemy is here and here and here." He touched the islands with the tip of his knife. "They have taken land near them which belongs to other people. And they have taken these pieces of land in the water where rich things are: oil and rubber and metal—things which the Americans need." Decidero was so earnest in the effort to say it so they would understand that he scarcely noticed his wife entering and Seraphina helping her to the sheep pelts.

"The enemy has these things and is trying to get other land, other islands with more rich things to give them strength and power. If the Americans—if we don't stop them here in these islands, the enemy will become so rich and strong they will come across the water and attack this land." Decidero was sketching roughly what looked to be the western coastline.

For one moment there was just the

scratching of the bright sharp knife as he outlined and re-outlined the little islands.

Against this silence, Seraphina's voice sounded old and quavering in disbelief. "This land . . . Little Canyon?"

There was a rush of murmuring hushed voices from the long-haired relatives.

"Aaaa . . . eeee," Decidero's mother exclaimed. "The enemy will come here!"

Decidero looked up quickly, realizing he had been misunderstood. But Juarito was standing before Decidero's wife and the chanting had begun again and was gaining voices. Attention shifted to the women's side of the hogahn. Decidero kept his eyes on the floor where the gleaming blade pointed to the little islands.

There was tension in all the faces. Seraphina was well occupied, but a furtive fear had crept into her eyes. Perhaps she was remembering how she had hid in caves with her family when the enemy Apaches came riding through Apache Wash. Enemy meant something to old Seraphina.

The chanting continued. Decidero's wife swayed and her knuckles whitened as she gripped the knotted end of the woven belt. Her eyes widened with effort and pain. The chant was rising again to a strong insistent rhythm, and Seraphina turned her attention wholly to the young patient. Hoshkey was watching Seraphina. He, too, seemed to be waiting.

The chanting stopped and Seraphina's voice reached out to Decidero. "Warrior, your knife." She did not say "warrior" lightly. This was an old woman addressing a young man who stood between her and things she feared.

The cord was cut and cold water splashed across the new-born. The baby was a girl child.

Hoshkev was talking to Decidero, addressing him alone, but somehow his

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voice carried to the others. "It is good you recognize the danger of this war even to a small and far-off place like Little Canyon."

"Of course!" Decidero interrupted, swaggering a little. "Once the enemy got to the West Coast, they would certainly try to come inland. There is the large airport at Albuquerque; they would try for that. Enemy planes coming in from the Coast, American planes coming off the ground at Albuquerque. There would be many planes in the air above us. Planes falling . . . burning. Machine-gun fire. It would be worse for Little Canyon than any Apache raid."

On Decidero's face was the look of one who has been awakened. Already he was being sought out by some of the Old Ones.

He-Who-Seeks-War got to his feet. "It is a good thing you are doing, Grandson, fighting for this land."

Decidero looked at Hoshkey. His shoulders straightened. The high moment of being important, of being listened to by the Old Ones, walked with him as he crossed the hogahn with He-Who-Seeks-

War and bent to look at his daughter.

There was no disappointment in his voice when he said, "Grandfather, you were going to name a son."

"I know of a name for a daughter," the old man answered. "The name given my youngest sister when we were fighting Apaches. It is a good name for this time—She-Comes-With-War!"

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*Juanita Platero and Siyowin Miller met in California in 1929 through Chief Standing Bear. Since 1930 Mrs. Platero has lived in New Mexico among her husband's people, and Mrs. Miller has shuttled between her friend's home on the reservation and California. Through the suggestion and help of John Russell McCarthy, the Millers and Plateros began work in 1940 on "The Winds Erase Your Footprints"—Juanita and Luciano Platero's struggle for a middle path between the divergent Anglo and Navajo cultures. Work on this book led to short stories of the same background and characters.*

*The illustrations are by Bernadine Custer.*

AMERICAN WORKERS

## NOTES ON AMERICAN CULTURE

JAMES G. LEYBURN

THE IMPACT of millions of people upon other millions during the past century and a half in America interests the sociologist both in its effect upon the culture of the immigrants and upon the culture of the Americans.

It is easy enough to say that the influx of foreigners has inevitably had an effect upon American culture. But do we understand specifically what we mean by "culture"? We realize that the term means more than refinement and a broad education; what else does it mean? If this term is properly used, many of the problems of ethnic and national impact will be made clearer to us.

Note, first of all, that *culture* is *not* biological. It has nothing to do with physical heredity. One of the first lessons we learn in our biology courses is that all human beings, of whatever color or breed, belong to the single species *Homo sapiens*; any normal adult male can mate with any normal adult female; all normal human beings share the pangs of hunger, the drive of sex, the range of emotions from fear to exaltation, the ability to talk, and the power of reasoning. In these respects, black does not differ from white, nor Oriental from American Indian.

Our biology courses teach us next that heredity is a stable, relatively unchanging factor. Man's physical characteristics have not appreciably changed within the past ten thousand years. The physical traits of parents will be passed on to their children according to Mendelian laws. Tall black parents with flat noses and

kinky hair will have children who resemble them; parents of Mongoloid physical characteristics will produce children Mongoloid in appearance.

So much is patent. But is there a Negro culture? Does a baby born to Chinese parents have a predisposition to Chinese culture? The answer is No. Before we have been with a Frenchman and a German for ten minutes we recognize radical differences between them. But this difference may not be one of appearance. Indeed, many an expert anthropologist is unable to distinguish the nationality of a member of the white race (or of the black or any other) from his looks alone. What marks off the Frenchman from the German is his culture—not what he has biologically inherited, but what he has learned from infancy onward in his social environment: his language, his customs, his ideals, his preferences, his behavior.

Culture is not human nature, but second nature. If a French baby were adopted at birth by Eskimos, before he had begun to learn French habits of thought and action, he would grow up an Eskimo in everything but appearance; he would eat blubber, hunt seals, make kayaks, and he would lack all those characteristics which we commonly attribute to Frenchmen—logicality, thrift, excitability, and the rest—except in so far as they were also Eskimo characteristics. When we speak of such traits as French excitability, the Latin temperament, Dutch phlegm, English restraint, we tend to think that these are

inherent in the people. They are not. They are culturally approved attitudes which are impressed upon a child almost at his mother's breast. To use our former illustration, an infant of typical Dutch parents growing up in Italy under normal circumstances, and with Italian foster parents, would have a Latin temperament.

Our culture, then, we get by imitation and inculcation from the people among whom we grow up. There are among us many hundred-per cent Americans who are children or grandchildren of tall blond Swedes or small swarthy Greeks. The hereditary physical traits have not changed unless there has been intermarriage, but the culture has.

The upshot of this matter is that we need never fear that alien *blood* can in any way affect our culture, nor need we fear intermarriage with any of our immigrants.

What precisely is culture? It consists of three parts: ideas, behavior, and material things. If you went on an ethnographical expedition whose purpose was to describe the culture of a primitive tribe, you would try to bring back a report of what the people thought, what they did, and what they had—as a group. And with your outsider's detachment, you would probably be able to give a pretty fair description of the essentials of their culture. It is not so easy to describe our own complicated American culture (not only because it is complicated, but also because, being parts of it, we cannot view it objectively), and I know of no one, historian, sociologist, anthropologist, or philosophical critic, who has been able to give us more than a partial picture.

These three components of culture (which we may call the mental, the behavioral, and the material) are all closely interrelated with each other, as we shall presently see. Bearing these three aspects in mind, wherein consists the problem of ethnic and national impact? What have

the alarmists feared when they have warned that our American culture might be swamped by the millions of Italians, Slovenes, Poles, and others? Surely they were not concerned over the material things these immigrants might bring in with them. On the contrary, they have often even adopted some of their material objects, such as foods, furniture, and craft products. From your reading you will certainly have already seen that the divergent behavior first of all attracted unfavorable attention, and then the native Americans, their minds fixed upon this divergent behavior, assumed that the ideas and motives prompting it were likewise divergent, and if divergent, dangerous.

Being an American does not mean to us *primarily* the things we use—our automobiles, our houses, our machines, our roads, our chewing gum. It does not even mean *primarily* our behavior, although this touches us more deeply. What really stirs our hearts and minds is our set of ideals and values. Often we do not realize explicitly what these are until they are threatened. But in the present crisis we know with our innermost being how dear to us are our American ideals of democracy, decency, and individual freedom, our belief in free speech and in free elections and in the right to worship as we choose, our family mores, our religious faith, our respect for certain symbols which convey these ideals to our attention (the American flag, for example).

It is this *mental* aspect of culture which gives us what security we have in life. Conversely, it is a threat to this part of our culture which disturbs us most profoundly. By a perfectly understandable, if elliptical, bit of reasoning, we tend to conclude that when people look and act differently from ourselves, they must think and feel differently about basic matters. The more ignorant people are, the more suspicious they are likely to be of differ-



ences from the customary. Precisely because new immigrants are recognizable in looks, language, and acts, suspicion against them is aroused.

Our grandparents apprehended clearly that immigrants can bring this mental part of their Old World culture with them, unchanged, to the New World. When, therefore, they saw the German immigrants amusing themselves on Sunday in their beer gardens—"desecrating the Sabbath," as they called it—how could they be sure that this behavior did not betoken a lack of sympathy with all our American ideals and values, did not, in fact, constitute a threat to them? And when, in the last generation, the New Englanders, hardly yet accustomed to the presence of Irishmen, now saw southeastern Europeans with different folkways and standards of living actually outnumbering themselves, were they not justified in their alarm for American culture?

Increasingly through the 19th century, when the tide of immigration was swelling, this perturbation grew. Distrustful of the apparent mental nonconformity of the immigrant, Americans took steps which made his assimilation all the more difficult. Feeling ourselves to be an in-group and the newcomers an out-group, we have segregated them in Little Italys and in sections across the railroad tracks. Certain native Americans have tried to keep them from voting. We have excluded them from various organizations and institutions. And by these very acts of self-defense on our part we have delayed their adoption of our own cherished values.

Yet despite such shortsighted, if understandable, policies of dealing with the immigrant, two factors have worked in our favor, helping us to preserve and enrich many parts of our culture. The first of these, which needs but little comment, has been the willingness, nay, the eagerness, of most of the immigrants to become

Americans, not only in externals, but heart and soul. If the first generation often found this difficult—and they did, for the adult mind cannot easily take on new patterns of thought—the second generation found it much simpler; and the third generation has been no longer foreign, but truly American. In this same connection it might be pointed out that we were more numerous than any single group of immigrants; our American culture was one, while their cultures were many; ours was a single reservoir in which their diversities met and merged.

The other factor working in favor of the preservation of American culture is a subtler one; it has to do with a characteristic of culture itself. So closely related are the ideas, the behavior, and the material goods of a group, that each of them has an inner logic in terms of the others. *A change in one element of culture is almost sure to produce an adaptive change in other elements.* The obviousness of this simple, but significant, idea will be clear upon reflection. One illustration will suffice. When the automobile came into wide use in the United States, first our behavior patterns changed. We became more mobile as a people; cities grew, while rural population declined proportionately; new occupations were made necessary; styles in women's clothes were modified. The effects were even more far-reaching: our courtship customs changed, and church attendance was affected. And these are but half a dozen of the literally thousands of consequences attendant upon a change in our material culture.

Let us now apply this idea. The values and ideas of our immigrants *had been* logically related to the artifacts and to the behavior of the Old World regions from which the newcomers derived. Almost as soon as these people stepped upon our shores, however, they had perforce to use *our* machines and follow *our* economic

methods. This adoption of our goods and our methods in order to gain an economic livelihood meant inevitably learning new patterns of behavior and new habits; and these in turn soon produced new ways of thinking—for, of course, our own symbols and mores had taken their logic from our material culture and behavior. It is, in fact, a generalization of almost universal application that adjustment and assimilation begin first in the material realm, since the immediate sense of the new *things* is obvious. The very absorption of these foreigners into our economic life meant the ultimate assimilation by them of our culture, or at least of a very large part of it.

Anyone who reads history, anyone who has heard his grandfather tell about how things used to be when he was a boy, knows that culture is dynamic. This is another of the aspects of the problem of impact which concerns us. Even within our own lifetime there have been changes in American culture; but such changes have been so slow, and we have felt so secure in the comfortable familiarity of American society, that we have been able to take these changes in our stride. Our culture is logical to us, and we are spiritually secure because of this. But put ourselves for a moment into the place of the immigrant, particularly of the first generation. However much he might have told himself that he must expect to use new goods, new techniques, new habits instead of the old familiar ones of southern Italy or Yugoslavia, he can hardly have prepared himself to see dozens of his *moral* notions challenged. Much American behavior and many American ideas to which we do not give a second thought have struck first-generation immigrants as dangerous or even abhorrent. Girls in America went unchaperoned, children displayed little respect for parental authority, the hold of the church was relaxed, money was spent for pleasure of the moment instead of be-

ing put by with peasant thrift against a rainy day.

Whereas the cultural changes we have faced have come so gradually that we could make an easy and normal adjustment to them, the cultural changes the immigrant had to make were so sudden and radical as to be almost disruptive. As the writers on immigration point out, it is the usual course of events for the first generation to experience conflict and disorganization. Reorganization and assimilation come later. Had it not been for such immigrant institutions as foreign-language clubs and churches and newspapers, to renew the comfort of the familiar, undoubtedly many of the new arrivals would have become demoralized, or would have turned to criminal acts of violence.

Here again is a paradox. Many Americans have looked upon these immigrant institutions with suspicion, fearing them as centers of alien propaganda, citing them as proof that aliens could not be, or at least were not being, assimilated; yet actually they broke the shock of novelty and so made a new adjustment possible. All such institutions tend to die. The second generation has little need of them or desire for them, and the third generation practically never needs them. With the flow of immigration stopped, they will all disappear—or else they will radically change their character, as Tammany Hall has done.

The millions of immigrants who came to our shores before the 1880s have been so completely absorbed into the body of American life and culture that we no longer think of them as constituting problems. Despite the outcries of our alarmists, despite all the Native-American movements, the average Americans have seen the need of assimilation and have fostered it—at times almost too fast. But if the process of absorption for the immigrants before 1880 has been fairly complete, the same is not true for the more

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recent ones. The reason is simply that there has not yet been time enough. We still have thousands of first-generation immigrants, and millions of second-generation ones. If it seems to you unlikely that they will ever be assimilated, because of their differences from us in background and culture, bear in mind that our ancestors felt the same way very often about the immigrants of their day. Scotch-Irish, Irish, Germans, Swedes—all those Northern Europeans whom our recent immigration laws have favored—were in times past looked upon as dangerous elements and harmful influences; yet we now know how much richer our national life is because of their presence. Given time, and a continuation of our present restrictive immigration laws, there is every reason to expect the absorption of the newer stocks.

In conclusion, it might be suggested that the United States, in its experience with 38,000,000 immigrants, may have a contribution to make to our distraught world of today. We have, whether by sheer luck or by good common sense, effected a peaceful mingling of diverse cultures under freedom. Had we taken the contrary course of opposition, we should merely have perpetuated the diversities. Despite temporary discriminations and injustices, we have in the long run afforded our immigrants equal opportunity, full

citizenship, and equality. And now, in this present crisis, we are being repaid with the loyalty of our so-called "enemy aliens" and of those of foreign stock. It is conceivable that our American experience might be taken as a model for post-war Europe.

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This essay was delivered by Dr. Leyburn as an informal lecture before the students in the Princeton Conference in American Civilization in the Spring of 1943, which chose as its topic for analysis "Foreign Influences in American Life." Under that title, the lectures delivered before the Conference (including this by Dr. Leyburn) were edited by Professor David F. Bowers, Director of the Conference, and published by the Princeton University Press in September 1944, with whose permission we reprint. This is an important book in the COMMON GROUND field.

## WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY

MILLA Z. LOGAN

EVERY Sunday morning my little brother and I sat on our front steps and stared moodily at the procession of children going to Sunday School.

Sitting there in my starched, white, dotted-Swiss dress with its pink sash and matching hair ribbon, I would have given up all my finery and my afternoon donkey ride in the park, too, just for one hour of Sunday School.

Everybody but little Serbian boys and girls went to Sunday School, it seemed. Every Sunday morning my Irish and Italian schoolmates waved their prayerbooks at me as they skipped happily to St. Brigid's Church, arm in arm with the grocer's blonde, rosy-cheeked daughters who dropped off at the Lutheran Church. Unorganized numbers of "American" children passed us in ones and twos on their way to more remote churches of vague denominations. Always late and dawdling lazily down the steep cobblestoned hill to the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the little Spanish children wound up the procession.

Watching them go and nursing a left-behind feeling was not the worst of it. It was when the children came home brandishing their colored cards of Jesus and the Saints that I felt the sharpest bite of envy. Whenever my morale hit this low, I made up my mind that someday, somehow, I would find a way to become a part of this Sunday excitement.

My mother had explained to me why we didn't go to Sunday School. Like all her explanations of why things that hap-

pened to other people never happened to us, this one lacked comfort, too. Instead of belonging to a religion that everybody knew about, we were Greek Catholics. This was very confusing because we were Serbians, not Greeks, and most of the people who went to our little church were Russians. The Greek Catholic Church in San Francisco was very small and the priests held services all Sunday morning and there was therefore no one to take charge of a Sunday School. There were two Catholic Churches, the Greek and the Roman. One had Sunday School, catechism classes, and Sunday School plays, but we had to belong to the one that had none.

My weekly resolution to get myself into a Sunday School did not come from lack of religion in my home life. We lived in respectful familiarity with God and the Saints. Hundreds of times a day I heard the older people say, "Ako Bog Da" (If God wills). Bog controlled our personal lives from the most insignificant household arrangement to the biggest family crisis. Bog decided that Cousin Péro should go to sleep forever. Bog willed that I should have the mumps and stay home from school on the day I was to skip a grade. Once in a while, as my mother always predicted He would, Bog did something specially nice for us. Once, after my little brother had almost died of bronchial pneumonia, Bog made him well again, and another time He saw to it that I went to the head of my class in school. Bog's brightly colored ikons covered the walls

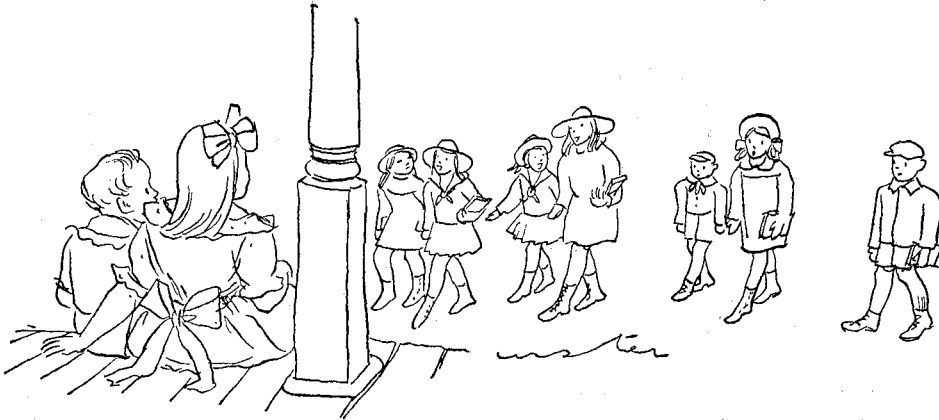
of our house, and at the head of each bed were carved figures of His Son on the cross. He was the last person we spoke to before we went to sleep at night and the first person we greeted when we woke up.

Yet our intimacy with Bog, close as it was, never fully satisfied me. The torment of those empty Sunday mornings nagged at me. Mother suggested that I could go to church if I felt like it. The spirit in which that suggestion was made always let me down. Other children *had* to go to Sunday School. Regular parents insisted on it, rain or shine. But my mother, with unbecoming indifference, merely suggested that I could go to church if I wanted.

I tried going, a few times. My father was always sorry, but he had to go down to get some papers out of his safe and he couldn't go with me. My mother was not strong enough to stand up through three hours of services. My aunts had to help

cause nobody in our house got up that early. By the time I slipped into the women's side of the church, services were in full swing.

A few Russian immigrant women with bright handkerchiefs on their heads were usually down on their knees with their heads touching the floor. The priests with their long beards and heavily brocaded robes were swinging censers before the Saints on the many stained-glass windows. For a few minutes I tried to make myself feel reverent. The fragrance of the incense and the stern looks of the priests always impressed me for a little while. But the feeling wore off long before the head priest dragged out from behind the altar doors his richly embroidered pulpit stand and a huge gold book from which he chanted for an hour. I listened to the endless chants without music and hoped that each response of the choir would be its last. If I could have seen the choir, look-



cook the big noonday meal, and my little brother couldn't go because he needed all the fresh air he could get.

Except for its cross, our church didn't even look like other churches. Its outside was a little like a mosque and there were no seats inside, only a few kitchen chairs for the very old. I never could get there in time for the beginning of the services be-

ing the members over might have diverted me a little. But they were in a gallery behind me and I didn't dare turn my head, though the compulsion to turn was as strong sometimes as the unsatisfied need to scratch my back. I passed most of the time trying to catch glimpses of the trousers of the priests' street clothes under their gorgeous robes. When the priests

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disappeared behind the altar for long periods, I switched my attention to the lighted candles and made bets with myself which would burn out first.



One part of the service always held my interest. A shockheaded, wiry little Englishman, whose name they said was Mr. Jones, stepped out from behind the altar every Sunday morning and read the Nicene creed in clipped British accents. It was not only because this part of the service was not in early church Slavonic that I listened with such interest. It was the wonder of Mr. Jones. The story was that he admired the Greek Catholic faith above all others and felt privileged to be given this assignment, even though he had to wear a long black robe and white tunic instead of the radiant regalia of our priests. Mr. Jones' state of mind puzzled me. Here

was someone who could belong to a church where the behavior and language of the priests could be comprehended. Mr. Jones had the choice of going to a church where he could sit in comfort and listen to soothing organ music, and yet he would give up all that to suffer the boredom and inconvenience of this alien religion.

Once in a while there was a sermon in a language that was a cross between Russian and Serbian, for the accommodation of both groups. But the congregation didn't care much for sermons. "He should have been a lawyer," they said of one priest who insisted on sermonizing every Sunday before he closed the services with the usual prayer for the President of the United States and the Czar of Russia.

I would have enjoyed getting in the procession to kiss the cross and receive a spoonful of communion bread and wine after the services, but my mother had ruled out public cross kissing as unsanitary. So I came home feeling as old and dispirited as any of the bearded patriarchs who had sat on the kitchen chairs on the men's side of the church.

I was strongly tempted to join the Roman Catholic Church, but I didn't dare. There seemed to be some bitterness on our side toward the Papacy and other "upstart" Roman institutions. I found that out while I attended a Roman Catholic parochial school a short time. The only reason I was in such an institution was because the public schools were all on the other side of a broad avenue which was considered too dangerous for me to cross alone.

One night, while I was saying my prayers, my father caught me practicing a forbidden act of Roman heresy: I was blessing myself with all fingers of the right hand instead of three and I was crossing myself from left to right instead of from right to left. This threw my usually good-natured father into a temper.



The next morning he took me by the hand to school and scolded the gentle Sisters.

"You stop making a Roman Catholic out of my child or I'll put her in another school," he warned the Sister Superior. "The next time she comes home with the wrong blessing you'll hear from me—and so will she," he added, with a threatening look in my direction.

To enforce his rulings he took me to school every morning and stood by through prayers to see that I used the proper number of fingers—counterclockwise.

This unaccustomed supervision by my father kept up for about a week. Then it suddenly occurred to someone in the family that as long as I was requiring an adult escort to school every morning, I might just as well be accompanied to a public school. This ended the controversy with the Roman Catholic Church, but it also eliminated its Sunday School as a solution to my problem.

While I was shopping around for another, a very pleasant neighbor—the sweetest, mildest-mannered lady I had ever met—asked if I would like to join the Christian Science Sunday School. I had not contemplated a Sunday School as far as ten blocks away from home and, besides, none of the children I knew were Christian Scientists. But this lady was so kind, and she always spoke to me so gently, that I put myself in her hands.

She came to visit my mother one day to ask if she could take me to Sunday School. "I've had such nice little talks with this little tyke of yours," she told my mother. "I think we have a way to solve her problem. Would you let her come with me on Sundays to be with some lovely little girls her own age? We'll do our best to give her some lovely thoughts."

Mother could have been more friendly, I thought. Rather ungraciously she consented if the lady would see that I got

home in time for our big Sunday meal. "My husband doesn't like his roast to be dried in the oven and we must have lunch on the dot every Sunday," she warned. "We sit down promptly at 12 and the meat must be juicy."

My nice friend accepted these terms meekly and promised to have me home on time.

My first Sunday in the Christian Science Church was an exhilarating experience. The whole Sunday School assembled in a body to sing hymns. I sang lustily and emptied my lungs with every roll of the great organ. After the community singing, we broke up into small groups. The girls in my class were all strangers to me but they were very friendly. The teacher was another kind rosy-cheeked woman in a brightly colored print dress and a big white hat with roses on it. She gave me a little book called a "Quarterly" and told me next time to bring my mother's. I read with much expression each time I was called on. We wound up this delightful morning, marred



only by the reference to my mother's Quarterly, with community singing.

We sang again the next Sunday. This time I knew some of the words of the hymns without looking in the book. My mother had given me money for a Quarterly and now I didn't have to borrow one. At the end of the lesson the teacher

gave us special assignments. She told me to get help for mine from my mother's *Science and Health* and *Key to the Scriptures*.

The kind neighbor, who seemed less interested in me now than before I went to Sunday School, lent me her *Science and Health* and said my mother could keep it. Mother mislaid the volume and we were never able to find it again. When Sunday came, my lesson was unprepared. I dreaded having to face the nice teacher but she was very forgiving.

"That's why we're here," she told me. "To learn there is no such thing as forgetfulness. Next time you will remember. You may have another assignment now. Ask Mother to help you with it. You'll find some of the references in her *Science and Health* and in her *Christian Science Sentinel*.

The assignment hung over my head all week. I nagged Mother into buying a *Science and Health* but we couldn't seem to find the right issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

But when Sunday came, I couldn't go to Sunday School because the Serbian and Montenegrin Benevolent Society was giving an all-day picnic and we had to be at the Ferry Building for an early start. I didn't see how I could keep up with the other girls in the Christian Science Sunday School anyway, without more family backing. Their parents were Christian Scientists. Who knew what other resources unknown to my family we would be called on to produce next in this Sunday School?

I didn't feel so sad about this failure because I had a new project in mind. We were moving across the Bay for the summer, and on the day we rented the place I saw something that gave me a new lease on life. Across the street from us was an ivy covered stone church—a Presbyterian Church—and my mother, herself, said I

was to go there every Sunday. Before we moved to the country, my mother bought me a Bible and some other little books that would be needed in this new Sunday School. This was going to be different. This time I was not on my own.

The first day we were in the new house, Dora, the little girl across the street came over to play with me. She was the Presbyterian minister's daughter, she told me, and she had been very lonesome for a girl playmate her own age. We found we had a great deal in common. We both liked the same kind of dolls, and we liked them in large families. We both had pet cats and we both wished we had dogs. We had the same set of paper dolls, too. She had "Oz" books I didn't have, and I had the ones she hadn't read. It was going to be a perfect friendship. Dora was sure of it when I told her I was a Presbyterian.

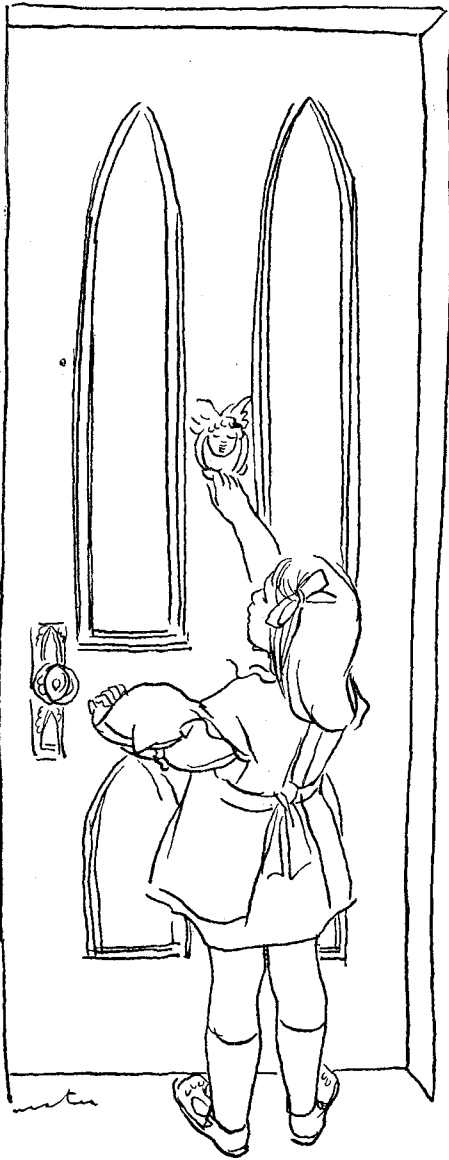
"I'll take you to Sunday School myself next Sunday and you will be in my class," she promised.

This Sunday School was more fun than the Christian Scientist. The songs were louder and they had more swing. Right away they put me in the Sunday School play and in the Sunday School quartette. I got a medal for having the best scrap book on the heathen, though it seemed disloyal to my old friends in Hiawatha to put the American Indians in the book. There were some parts of the Sunday School lessons to which I did not pay much attention—the parts about the evils of liquor and tobacco. This did not concern me. My father was a very good man who didn't smoke and drank nothing but some wine with his meals and a drink of whiskey before dinner.

After six weeks I won a perfect attendance medal and was promoted with Dora to another class. Sunday School became a routine in which there was no disturbance until the morning Dora asked me a strange question.

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"Are you sure your family are Presbyterians?" she asked.



"Yes," I told her, with some misgivings. "That's what they are. Presbyterians. Why?"

"Oh, nothing," she answered. "I was just wondering."

I had to know. "Please tell me why you

asked," I begged her. "Did we do something wrong?"

She was embarrassed but she told. "My mother has seen your mother sitting on the front porch sewing on Sundays. She wanted me to speak to you about it."

I didn't say anything to Mother. But I wondered uneasily how I was going to keep on being a Presbyterian.

The next Sunday we both saw with our own eyes that my mother was sewing on the Sabbath. "Haven't you spoken to her about it yet?" Dora asked.

But I didn't have time to think much about my mother's Sabbath-breaking that week. We were getting ready for a wonderful party. Mother and Father were celebrating their tenth wedding anniversary the following Sunday and we were to have a big family reunion and a huge barbecue. I decided to wreck my perfect attendance record at Sunday School rather than miss one minute of this exciting day.

By noon the house and garden were filled with babies and old couples and cousins my age and all the uncles and aunts who were their parents. We children got underfoot while they were barbecuing the lamb but nobody scolded us. Inside, they were roasting a huge turkey and boiling ravioli. The older people made the dinner lively with songs and toasts which lasted until twilight. It was the first grown-up affair I had enjoyed so fully.

The next day I felt ashamed at having neglected Dora. Just because I had had my cousins to play with was no excuse for forgetting her. I should have had her over to share the sweets with us.

To make up for my forgetfulness, Mother piled a huge platter with cold meats and sweets for me to take over for Dora's whole family to enjoy.

I knocked, but no one came to the door.

I knew they were home. I pounded again. I pounded more. After a long time

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Dora came to the door and opened it a crack.

"I can't play with you any more," she announced. "Your mother and father are drunkards." She slammed the door in my face.

I stood on the front porch, dazed. A second later her mother came to the door. "Go home now," she said gently, "and you had better not come to Sunday School any more."

Not go to Sunday School any more? Once, such a prohibition would have broken my heart. But now?

Sunday school was not all the glamour of picture cards and medals and singing I had imagined. It was a harsh system of "do's and don'ts" I knew I never could observe. When you went to Sunday School you had to think twice to remember if whatever you were doing was wrong. Who would ever have imagined, for in-

stance, that it was bad to call on God as we did in our house a hundred times a day when we said "Bogami"? And what was the matter with our gay Sunday dinners where everybody joked and laughed?

As I made my way thoughtfully across the street, I saw my mother and my aunt on the porch waving their arms at each other in a lively conversation. Suppose they ever got that worried, tight look the parents whose children went to my Sunday School had?

I broke into a run. I couldn't get across the street quickly enough to the easygoing life in my own house where we had such fun with Bog.

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Milla Z. Logan is a West Coast writer who has appeared frequently in COMMON GROUND.

The illustrations are by Bernadine Custer.

## INCIDENT

EUGENE T. MALESKA

Three races played together—  
The yellow, black, and white—  
And never questioned whether  
It was wrong or it was right.

Three children of three races  
Were concerned with playing ball  
And couldn't see that faces  
Made a difference at all.

Eugene T. Maleska is a teacher in the New York City schools.

# THE NEGRO AND THE CIO

HELEN M. GOULD

THE LABOR movement cannot afford to concern itself with too much abstract philosophy. It has a pragmatic approach to the affairs of the world. Freedom, justice, equality of opportunity, comradeship and co-operation are championed because they help workers in their struggle for a better life.

This realistic attitude has been well exemplified and justified in the area of race problems. Collective security is taking varied forms. Negroes are admitted and encouraged to join cio unions because, as workers, their support is needed and, as workers, they need union support. It is not practical to build up the security of one group of workers at the expense of another. Those excluded only serve to tear down standards painfully set up over the years by those included in the organization. White workers have found, too, that they cannot successfully concentrate on bargaining with employers on one hand while they struggle against a minority group of fellow workers on the other.

Though the mere preaching of brotherly love has dismally failed, this less idealistic viewpoint has managed to do an educational job whose roots seem at last to have taken hold below the topsoil of talk. There is a deep stirring in our folk ways. The bugaboo of so-called "natural antagonism" is being laid. By having wrestled with the difficulties of racial integration within industry, the cio has set an example in breaking bias and in practical democracy which the general population might well follow.

The Constitution of the cio established national policy on the question of race. Although the vastness of our country and its archaic attitude toward the Negro have militated against all local unions and all members falling into line on this issue, the general success of the cio stand has been gratifying. Ten per cent of its membership—over five hundred thousand workers—are Negroes, six times as many as there were six years ago.

In 1942, the cio established its Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination, by passing the following resolution: "Be It Resolved, That the cio now reiterates its firm opposition to any form of racial or religious discrimination and renews its pledge, as a war-time duty, to carry on the fight for protection in law and in fact of the rights of every racial and religious group to participate fully in our social, political and industrial life."

This Committee, through its subsidiary committees in each local, county, and state industrial union council, is doing a real job of educating the membership to understand why industrial unionism and racial prejudice cannot live side by side. Negroes, new to trade union membership, have been familiarized with the organization, activities, policies, and practices of their unions. Whites, unused to working on an equal basis along with Negroes, have found out for themselves that color is not the key to the virtues or vices of their fellow human beings. Legend has been confronted with plain fact.

The record of cio unions on the race

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issue is not wholly clean. There are still many localities and levels at which much remains to be done. Unionists are not all liberals, and management is frequently not liberal. But with the support of the government, through its Fair Employment Practices Act and rulings of the National Labor Relations Board, and with the impetus of the manpower shortage in the war production effort, the cio has accomplished many things:

The uaw-cio (United Automobile, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implement Workers) has done much pioneering in race relations. In 1940, when it organized the Ford plant, it had to include Negroes in its membership and at the same time to challenge their loyalty to Henry Ford, who had provided them the opportunity to gain industrial jobs. Now, 18,000 of the 90,000 members of Local 600 (the Dearborn plant) are Negroes, many of whom have good jobs at good pay. In less than four years, then, a huge group of undisciplined workers in a deeper than average melting pot of races, creeds, and nationalities have formed themselves into a well organized powerful body, the largest local union in the world.

The Detroit riots served to emphasize this solidarity. During the stupidity and horror, cio workers, both white and black, went on about their jobs, without incident. uaw workers had already been sufficiently educated to prevent them from rioting in the shops, however badly some may have behaved outside. And it came as a surprise to many that in mixed residential neighborhoods there was no rioting. Respect for common property was partly responsible for this. Rioters on both sides confined themselves to damaging property belonging solely to what they considered the enemy. And, during working hours, at least, auto workers confined themselves to producing war machines.

In California, in the plant of the North

American Aviation Company, Negroes were hired only for janitorial jobs before the war. When the uaw-cio requested equal consideration for Negroes, the result was that almost 2,000 Negro women are on production jobs.

In the New York shops of the ue (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers), one per cent of the employees or 172 Negroes were employed in May 1942. Eight months later, 3.7 per cent or over 1,000 of the total employees in the union were Negroes.

The Oil Workers International Union, even though most of its membership is in the southwest, has considerably discouraged the establishment of Jim Crow unions and has recently altogether banned such locals, by the provision that they must be assimilated into the white locals within two years. This has been no easy role, since many Negroes, especially in the South, are themselves unaware of the necessity for and advantage of non-racial unionism. But when the War Labor Board, through the efforts of the cio, abolished wage inequalities based solely on color, even Negroes who had never before sympathized or allied themselves with labor unions sat up and took notice. Once they became aware of cio policy on race issues, their minds were opened to labor's point of view on other important economic matters which concern them.

In the UTSEA (United Transport Service Employees) of which Willard S. Townsend, member of the cio Executive Board, is president, the members understand clearly the importance of a racial minority throwing its weight in the direction of measures which benefit the whole population. Rather than seek special privilege for themselves as Negroes, their experienced leadership has shown them that before being Negro workers they are American workers. This is still a moot point even in trade union circles because



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of the hangover from days of paternalism toward minorities. The long-range view, however, seems clearly to indicate the wisdom of non-discrimination either in favor of or against a particular group.

The meat packing industry has also shown sizable advances for its Negro members, who constitute about 38 per cent of the union total; there are several top spot Negro officers of the union. One of the apprentice training schools for shipbuilding admits Negroes to courses leading them to skilled jobs. Aircraft and allied industries which hired no Negroes before the war have had to change their policy in the tight labor market.

When, last year, an outbreak of "hate strikes" was met with firm cio opposition, white workers soon stopped protesting the upgrading of Negroes and went back to work, sadder but wiser for the stoppage. Besides causing minor work stoppages, this pan-racial policy has cost the cio several labor board elections. But the price of democracy cannot be inflationary.

At the last conventions of international unions and of the national cio, there was a noticeable increase over the previous year in the numbers of Negro delegates and participants. Even at the Texas State cio Convention, Negro delegates were accorded the same privileges as whites, with deference shown to local practices of segregation in the matter of housing only. And in the New Orleans Industrial Union Council, one of the vice-presidents is a Negro.

The cio Committee for American and Allied War Relief is another agency which has done a great deal toward breaking down prejudice through practical means. In allocating the huge sums donated by cio workers to war relief activities of all kinds, the Committee insists that the money be spent without recourse to racial discrimination. With representation on

the boards of the various welfare and relief agencies, the War Relief Committeemen are in a sound position to gain respect for, if not full agreement with, their views. As one of their speakers succinctly stated, "The sweetness-and-light approach to social welfare is all very good when it works, but money works!"

Dr. Robert P. Weaver of the American Council on Race Relations has said, "The upgrading of Negroes and the industrial employment of Negro women are not social experiments. They are wartime economic necessities. . . . It is not white men's work we have to do—it is war work, and there is more than enough of it. These truths must be told and retold until they become part of the average citizen's thinking."

The labor movement cannot do all this telling by itself. It can provide courageous and intelligent leadership. It can educate and influence its own members and their families. It can experiment with techniques of assimilation. It can fight for adequate housing facilities and playgrounds for all workers and their children. It can make demands of management. It can persuade the government. But it will take a combination of economic necessity and public opinion to clinch the matter. The economic necessity is there, but public opinion lags.

When the war ends, with attendant reconversion unemployment, our nation will face the real test. Negro war workers and veterans will not relinquish their gains without a struggle. The cio is committed to non-discrimination—before, during and after the war. And it believes there can be useful jobs for all our citizens, in peace as in war.

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*Helen M. Gould is editor of the Department of Education and Research of the CIO.*

# AMERICAN SONG FROM THE NEGRO

DAVID EWEN

UNQUESTIONABLY, the Negro has been the richest contributor to the storehouse of American folk music. His songs have not only been the proudest and the most artistically significant fruits of our native music-making; more than that, they have exerted a direct and permanent influence on our popular music.

It is not difficult to comprehend why the Negro should have been so productive in music. He was, by nature, musical, expressing himself through rhythm and melody more naturally and instinctively than through speech. Beyond this, the conditions in which he was to find himself in this country (transplanted from familiar settings into a new cruel world where he was despised and rejected) inspired the birth of music: for the emotional disturbances he felt demanded an outlet.

From the heart of Africa, from which he had been snatched and brought in chains, the Negro brought with him devices of African music. It is not easy to say now how much of his later song contained within itself elements of African music; but there are those scholars (among them Dr. Lorenzo Turner and James Barnes) whose studies in African music encourage the belief that the African influence was profound. The extraordinary variety of rhythm found in the Negro stamping of feet, clapping of hands, swaying of head and body as he chanted his songs, derive from African voodoo rites with their incessant throb of drums and

accented measures by hands and feet. The syncopated beats and the shifting accents always betray African ancestry. So does the actual song-form of "call and answer": one line is provocatively thrown out by a leader and is answered by a repetitious word, phrase, or sentence intoned by a group of voices.

But the music of the Negro, in its richest development, is no longer the music of Africa. The same subtle chemistry that entered into all our foreign-born folk music, transforming it into something unmistakably American, played its part in the evolution of the Negro song. For one thing, the Negro in this country came into contact with European melody and harmony; he was far too musical not to be affected by such an influence. As he sang, African rhythms were married to European melody and harmony to produce an altogether new kind of musical expression.

Characteristics were developed found nowhere else in our musical folk art: the downward progression of some of the cadences; the elastic lapses from major to minor without formal modulations; the freedom in the use of rhythm and pitch; the different decorations found in the melody with repetitions; the occasional indulgence in a scale of pentatonic character or, in the formal major and minor scales, the frequent injection of notes (preferably the flatted third and seventh) foreign to the scale.

In the New World, the Negro found

Christianity, and it became for him a refuge and solace. His intense religious emotions became in turn the emotions of his songs. This common escape into the religion of Christianity (as well as the similar environment, conditions, influences, and problems faced by all Negroes in the new country) was responsible for the emergence of a homogeneous song, even though the Negroes themselves had originally come from different parts of Africa and had known different tribal customs and different kinds of musical expression.

An outcast in a strange land, with a strange language, habits, customs, the Negro was a child of sorrow. Frequently he was separated from his loved ones on the auction block, never again to see them. The lash of the overseer's whip, the harsh abuse of a martinet-master, made his hard work so much the more insufferable. He had to suffer his fate with silent acquiescence, for nobody, except others as black of skin as he, knew the trouble he was seeing.

An outlet for his misery came through singing; an escape from it was provided through religion. Frequently the two—song and religion—became one and the same thing. Sometimes the Negro sang sad, elegiac tunes—"sorrow songs" they have appropriately been called, the lamentations of an oppressed people. Sometimes his primitive instincts (an atavistic recollection of his African past) found release in orgiastic "shouts." But whether he sang in sorrow or in religious ecstasy, the Negro gave expression to a music which, though of primitive origin, became a great art. "In the Negro melodies of America," wrote Antonin Dvořák, after a study of Negro music which inspired him to compose his *Symphony From the New World* and the *American Quartet*, "I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music. They are pathetic, tender, pas-

sionate, melancholy, solemn, religious, bold, merry, gay, gracious. . . . It is music that suits itself to any mood and purpose."

## II

The Negro Spiritual stands sharply apart from all other American folk music. Its technical peculiarities have already been touched upon. Beyond this, it was created for the most part not by specially endowed ballad singers in the way shanty tunes, sailor chanteys, cowboy melodies, or the songs of the western pioneers were. Often it arose out of the hearts of an entire race of people. It was born, it grew, developed, and changed—and there was rarely evident any one identifiable hand (or several hands) in this birth and evolution. The creation of groups rather than of individuals, the Spiritual is almost alone in our folk music in being sung harmonically rather than by single voices.

The Spiritual (the "shouts" particularly) was frequently produced spontaneously, inspired by excited emotion, and carried on by the sheer momentum of hypnotized singers. It was "evolved partly under the influence of association with whites, but in the main, original in the best sense of the word; the inspiration of a moment of ecstasy, the expression of religious elation curiously intermingled with emotion of intrinsically barbaric character; the chanted prayer of a simple child-like mind, the melodious cry of a 'soul on its knees.'"

The Spiritual can be roughly subdivided into three groups. The first utilizes the "call and answer" form, African in its origin. Some of the most original and effective Spirituals are in this category. Usually in fast tempo, these are invariably spirited melodies, full of passion (for example *Shout for Joy* and *The Great Camp Meeting*). The second group is in a slower and more stately tempo, utilizing a long, sustained phrase as the principal melodic

subject (*Deep River, Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen*). In the third group we find some of the most famous Spirituals in the repertory. In place of a long sustained phrase in the melody, the lyric line is composed of segments of rhythmic patterns decidedly syncopated in nature (*Little David, Play on Yo' Harp, All God's Chillun Got Wings*).

The most wonderful of the songs—not only for their emotional content but for variety in form and melody—are those that arose from the Negro's simple deep piety. Religion fired the Negro's imagination and set it aflame. Christianity compensated him for his sufferings by giving him promise of a greater life to come. It taught him there was nobility in patience, hope, resignation. It gave an avenue through which to forget himself and his trials.

His Christmas carols, like *Glory to New Born Babe* and *Rise Up Shepherd and Foller*, are among the most beautiful in carol literature: devout, tender, humble, often touched with an other-world spirituality. When the Negro sang of the crucifixion of Christ, he brought to his singing the immense and shattering sorrow of one who feels himself crucified as well. Perhaps nothing more moving or noble has been said in music about the crucifixion than spirituals like *He Never Said a Mumblin' Word* or *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* (The possessive pronoun in the singular in the latter Spiritual is important: the Lord was someone personal and intimate to the Negro, to whom he could speak his heavy heart openly as if to a sympathetic and understanding friend.) In Spirituals like these, the expression of sorrow is all the more intense and poignant for its restraint and understatement; it achieves a sublimity and otherworldliness comparable to the closing chorus of the *Passion According to St. Matthew* by Bach. The

religion of such Spirituals is, perhaps, the purest religion of all. As Heywood Brown wrote after attending a Negro Spiritual concert by Roland Hayes, these Spirituals express "a mood instead of a creed, an emotion rather than a doctrine. There was nothing to define and nothing to argue. Each person took what he felt and liked, whatever he had to feel, and so there was no heresy. . . . Half of the people who heard Hayes were black and the other half white; and while the mood of the song held they were all the same. They shared together the close silence. One emotion wrapped them. And at the end it was a single sob. . . . 'He never said a mumblin' word,' sang Hayes, and we knew that he spoke of Christ, whose voice was clear enough to cross all the seas of water and blood."

The Old Testament struck a particularly personal note with the Negro, for in the captivity of the Jews in Egypt he found a counterpart to his own sad position. *Let My People Go* rings out firm and clear in its interpretation of "Israel in Egypt land," because the Negro was, thereby, sounding a wish for his own emancipation. He could not openly confess his dreams of freedom, but in the appropriate allegory of the Old Testament he could speak unrestrictedly and without fear of reprisal. "Steal away to Jesus, Steal away home, I ain't Got long to stay here," was as much a hope for escape to places of liberation as it was an affirmation of deep religious conviction. Frederick Douglass emphasized this when he wrote: "A keen observer might have detected in our repeated singing of *O Canaan, Sweet Canaan, I am Bound for the Land of Canaan*, something more than a hope of reaching heaven. We meant to reach the North, and the North was our Canaan. . . . On our lips it simply meant a speedy pilgrimage to a free state, and deliverance from all evils of slavery."

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Not all the Spirituals had the majesty of the Crucifixion songs. Some, like *The Ol' Time Religion*, *I Know the Lord Laid His Hands on Me* were more dynamic, full of animal spirits, full of joy. These contained within them the seeds of future ragtime. Still others—they were, strictly speaking, not Spirituals but Shouts—were more hysterical. Shouts were an outgrowth of the African voodoo dance transformed by the American Negro into Christian religious worship. What began as devout service developed into delirium. James Weldon Johnson describes the Shouts vividly: "A space is cleared by moving the benches, and men and women arrange themselves, generally alternately, in a ring, their bodies quite close. The music starts, and the ring begins to move. Around it goes, at first slowly, then with quickening force. Around and around it moves on shuffling feet that do not leave the floor, one foot beating with the heel in a decided accent in strict two-four time. The music is supplemented by the clapping of hands. As the ring goes around it begins to take on signs of frenzy. The music, starting perhaps with a Spiritual, becomes a wild monotonous chant. The same musical phrase is repeated over and over, one, two, three, four, five hours. The words become a repetition of an incoherent cry. The very monotony of sound and motion produces an ecstatic state. Women, screaming, fall to the ground prone and quivering. Men, exhausted, drop out of the shout. But the ring closes up and moves around and around."

Mr. Johnson further explains that the Shout was illicit. "It was distinctly frowned upon by a great many colored people. Indeed, I do not ever recall seeing a 'ring shout' except after the regular service. Almost whispered invitations would go around, 'Stay after church; there's going to be a ring shout.' The more educated

ministers and members, as far as they were able to brave the primitive element in the churches, placed a ban on the ring shout."

Yet the popularity of the Shout has remained great among large groups of Negroes everywhere up to the present time. These Shouts produced music of incomparable barbarity and abandon. Familiar Spirituals were converted into febrile music, throbbing with rhythmic intensity. Frequently, too, new songs would be improvised in the delirium of the dancing and the worship. A refrain would be sounded, one voice would then interpolate a line, another voice would contribute another—and thus, in the heat and passion of the orgy, a new Negro melody would be born.

### III

It was some time before the rest of the country became acquainted with this music of the Southland. It first traveled northward on the Mississippi River. In 1811 the first steamboat traversed the length of the Mississippi, linking the North and South more closely than before. Southern cargo, fruits of the tropics, reached northern docks before the snow there began to melt. And the latest styles, gossip, and news of the North now came to the furthest point of the South while they were still comparatively new. By the middle of the century, about a thousand boats were traveling along the banks of the great river. Floating palaces, the last word in sumptuous trappings, the steamboats brought to their travelers a taste of that good life formerly known only to the rich. Traveling on the Mississippi became not only the favored mode of transportation for those desiring to go either North or South, but a popular type of holiday excursion. Gentlemen and ladies, dressed with almost foppish elegance, rubbed elbows on the decks, or, in the brilliantly

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lit dining room, with gamblers, traders, and cotton planters, as the boat progressed in leisurely fashion along the Mississippi valley.

Northerners who took excursions on the river brought back with them tales of a strange and wonderful music they heard the colored folk sing. Negroes working on the southern docks to load the ship with cargo would accompany their strained labors with songs of their own making. These "roustabout" melodies were generally improvised; they frequently spoke about the elegance of the boats, the personal traits of their captain, the difficulty of the work at hand. Sometimes they went even further afield to tell about a love affair, trouble with the police, or a fight. At times the lyrics were sheer nonsense:

*Ducks play cards and chickens drink  
wine,  
And de monkey grow on de grape-  
vine,  
Corn starch pudding and tapioca pie,  
Oh, de gray cat pick out de black  
cat's eye.*

Elements of the Negro Spiritual—the languorous melody and the syncopated beat particularly—were found in these songs. As the Negroes sang, they went through the motions of loading and unloading with a peculiar gait, a slouching motion of the body and rhythmic movements of the hands, a kind of dance that synchronized perfectly with the music.

The passengers watched these Negroes at their work and dance, listened to their music with fascination. They listened, too, to the strange chants which on other occasions Negroes sang for their benefit—and for the reward of some coin—when the boat made stops at the southern end of the river. The music made northern songs appear bloodless in contrast. When the passengers returned North, they spoke

about this strange music and frequently tried to recall it to mind, or to reproduce it on the keyboard of a piano.

It was from the Mississippi River that Mark Twain first heard Negro melodies and was seduced by them. "Away back in the beginning to my mind, their music made all other vocal music cheap." It was also from the river that Stephen Foster is believed to have acquired his flair for Negro music: Foster's father loaded and unloaded the Mississippi boats at Pittsburgh and made the Mississippi trip frequently; Foster's brother had a steamer of his own to make the voyage; it was inevitable that they bring back with them fragments of this unforgettable music to sing to Stephen.

Some Negro Spirituals were introduced in the North by the abolitionists who used them as propaganda for their rallies. But it was not until 1871, and a few years afterwards, that the Spiritual came into general popularity throughout the country. In that year, a group of singers from Fisk University called the Jubilee Singers toured the country in concerts devoted exclusively to Negro songs. Fisk University had been founded in 1866 in Nashville, Tennessee, to provide educational facilities for freed Negroes. Almost from the day of its founding it was harassed by financial problems. The treasurer, George L. White, had often heard the students sing in groups. In an inspired moment, he felt the entire country—the white majority particularly—might be interested in this poignant music of his race. The authorities reluctantly gave him permission to create a choral group comprising twelve pupils (at his own expense). For two years, he trained the ensemble until it acquired finish, precision, integration. On October 6, 1871, the group left Nashville for its tour of the country. The first concerts were greeted with cool reserve. But as the tour pro-



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gressed and as the music grew more familiar, the enthusiasm grew. The road was finally paved with unexpected triumphs. At the Gilmore Music Festival in Boston in 1872, an audience of 20,000 rose to its feet and shouted: "Jubilee forever!" In 1878, when the Fisk Jubilee Singers returned to the University, they brought back with them more than \$150,000—testimony that the Spiritual (first known as Jubilee Songs, in honor of the ensemble that made them famous) had conquered America, and conquered it decisively.

The fame of the Negro Spiritual now spread rapidly. The American critic, Henry E. Krehbiel, spoke for its musical importance, and by word of pen and mouth made many converts. One was Antonin Dvořák, who had come to America in 1892 to become director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvořák was won completely. His use of authentic Negro material in his major works inspired many other serious composers to write works in similar vein. The Negro composer, Henry T. Burleigh, came under Dvořák's influence and was encouraged by him to make many arrangements of Negro folk music which further helped spread propaganda for the Spirituals among artists and the general public. His *Deep River* was subsequently performed by the Flonzaley Quartet, Fritz Kreisler, Maud Powell, and Frances Alda, confirming the artistic importance which the Spiritual had now acquired.

### IV

Not all Negro folk songs are Spirituals. A musical people to the tips of their fingers, the Negroes created music for any and every condition in which they found themselves. Not only in religious worship or in lamentation over their sad fate did Negroes sing, but also in work and play. During their years of slavery, they relieved

the monotony and strain of cotton picking, toting bales, loading and unloading boats on the Mississippi, with singing. As they went through the motions of their work, their voices rang out, and their refrain carried with it the pulse and the rhythm of the work at hand.

*Got a nine foot shovel  
My pick is four foot long.  
I'm in a world of trouble,  
When I'm singing dis song,  
If you use a pick an' shovel,  
You sure can't mess aroun'.*

The work songs which were born and died with the Mississippi traffic have been commented upon. In the mines and tunnels of Virginia, the cotton fields of the South, the rock piles of prisons in Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas, a rich folk lore also grew. If it was music not so imaginative and so musically distinctive and moving as the Spiritual—these work songs were not born out of stirring emotional experiences and feelings but from the sheer humdrum monotony of a muscular job to be done—they nevertheless have their own fascination. Because they were sung out-of-doors, and never to the accompaniment of musical instruments to set the pitch and guide the intonation, these songs developed a curious intonation of their own. The voice was permitted to slide to tones foreign to the scale, and to intervals smaller than the half tone. The melody was sprinkled with grunts and groans which became part of the texture of the melodic line—grunts and groans that came from the physical strain of smashing a rock with hammer or ax, "flat-weeding" a ditch with hoe, or smashing through rock with a steel-drill. Out of this intonation a distinct melody and harmony developed; many years later this distinct intonation would become one of the major distinguishing features of authentic ragtime.

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This peculiar type of melody and harmony set an atmosphere of bleakness, generated a feeling of utter hopelessness which is found in all these songs. Negro work songs are drenched with pathos; even humorous verses appear in melodies saturated with melancholia. The work was unspeakably arduous, the conditions trying. In prison camps there was the barbarity of the overseers. In work camps there was the poor pay, and even that was often uncertain. Work songs frequently describe the difficulties under which Negroes labored:

*Told my Cap'n my hands was cold,  
Said, 'Damn your hands, boy,  
Let de wheelin' roll.'*

*Asked my Cap'n to give me my time,  
Damn ol' Cap'n wouldn' pay me  
no mind.*

*Raised my hand, wiped de sweat off  
my head.  
Cap'n got mad, Lord, shot my buddy  
dead.*

"I works from kin to can't" (from the time I first kin see till I can't see), sighs the Negro in lamenting his long hours. "O Cap'n has de money come? Tain't none of yo' bizness, I don't owe you none!" he sang sadly about the uncertainty of his wages. These songs may well be said to have been the progenitors of the later blues.

Many songs were improvised during the progress of the work. The leader would raise his voice in the opening of a song like *Boll Weevil* or *John Henry* (both of them classics of the cotton pickers and the steel drillers respectively) or *Nine Foot Shovel* (of the Georgia chain gangs). The leader was a specialist in his own right; he had to know expertly not only the work at hand but what songs could best be adapted to that work; a

good leader could inspire good work in his men, while a bad one—through poor timing—could actually hamper progress. The work gangs, taking their cue from their leaders, would chime in in the chorus in a convention-defying harmony. Verse after verse would be sung, for hours on end. Lines were interpolated freely; the melody was varied at will with each repetition; the rhythm was permitted flexible changes. The melody might emerge in a form completely different in the last verse from the first. Frequently, altogether new melodies would be born to familiar words, permitted to develop as one voice after another made its own contribution, after the leader threw out a phrase; frequently, too, new words were created in this same way to familiar tunes.

With his work done, the Negro found relaxation in dancing, and this dancing produced the Negro social song. The work song was strictly a *cappella*; the social song primarily instrumental. The work song was choral; the social song, solo. In his social songs, improvisation played an even more important role than in work fields. A singer, accompanied by a banjo, guitar, or violin, would give full freedom to his imagination as he discoursed musically on a great variety of subjects ranging from love to death, from heroes to notorious villains. The singer would add embellishments to the monotonous melody each time the principal melodic subject was repeated; often, at the inspiration of the moment, he would spontaneously make up altogether new songs to new texts.

Because social songs were primarily intended to encourage dancing, they were strongly rhythmical, much more so than the Spirituals or work songs. Though the instrumental accompaniment was, often as not, improvised, it showed harmonic resourcefulness splashed with original colors.

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Numerous troubadours arose who had a particular flair for preserving the folk song literature and even for creating new songs of a folk character. After Emancipation, many Negroes, in search of some manner of earning a living, turned to music. With guitars or banjos, they roamed around singing the songs they had learned as children, improvising new ones on any and every subject that presented itself, appearing on street corners, in saloons, in bawdy houses. They were frequently wandering minstrels, traveling alone from town to town. Some had no other occupation than their music-making; others might supplement their income from some occasional job with coins earned from public singing. One such troubadour was James A. Bland, who achieved fame by composing *Carry Me Back to Old Virginia* and *In the Evening by the Moonlight*.

One of the most famous of these troubadours—and characteristic of many others like him—is Huddie Ledbetter, better known as Lead Belly. Lead Belly's fabulous history is told in great detail in an anthology of his songs edited by the Lomaxes which should be read by everyone concerned with American folk music. For our purpose, it is necessary only to relate that with his twelve-tone guitar and his fabulous repertoire of folk music (some of which he, undoubtedly, created himself) Lead Belly sang his way out of prison and into national fame. He drew upon the fullest resources of work and social songs (most of which he had heard

and absorbed during his roving) and produced Negro songs of great variety. The richly ironic gem *Ham n' Eggs*, or the mournful ditty *Pick a Bale of Cotton* are random examples of the thousands of songs he sang from one end of the country to the other, and which the Lomaxes have collected and preserved.

### V

It is not essential to labor the point here that the Negro has influenced our popular music permanently and decisively. The physiognomy of American popular music has been shaped for the better by Negro songs; it is impossible to conceive what our popular music would have been had we had no Spirituals, Shouts, or Negro work songs. Their techniques and idioms, moods and atmospheres, personality and idiosyncrasies have formed the bone and tissue of our popular musical expression. The ragtime of New Orleans (from which, in turn, swing was evolved), the blues of St. Louis, the boogie-woogie of Chicago, the sophisticated jazz of New York—these obviously betray their debt to Negro creativity.

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David Ewen, prolific writer on American music, is now in the Army. He has appeared several times in *COMMON GROUND*, tracing America's musical heritage from its various immigrant groups. "America Becomes Musical" appeared in the Winter 1942 issue, and "America's Folk Music" in the Summer 1943 number.

## AMERICA IS GRAND!

LETTERS TRANSLATED BY  
MARGARET JACOBSON

*(These are excerpts from letters written during the years after Hitler's coming to power by children who came to the United States in special children's transports. A German-Jewish Children's Aid Committee placed them in the homes of foster parents. The Jewish Welfare League in Germany, which had arranged the children's transports, asked the parents of the youngsters for permission to copy the original letters written home, and then sent a collection of them to this country. They have a kind of timeless fresh discovery of the miracle of America: "Everything is beautiful, even the teachers.")*

"Dearest Mother,

"Saturday we went to a concert which would have cost at least 3 marks in Germany and here it was free and the music (Wagner, Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms) was first-class. It was simply grand. Nothing like that ever happened to me in Germany. Here I enjoy myself very much. I attend splendid concerts and shows. We go to the movies where the most important thing is not the picture but the stage show. There are so many things which are just wonderful and only possible in such a big city. Our beach here in Coney Island is very long and one can walk along the boardwalk for hours and still be looking for the end. And then next to it, or rather behind it, there's the Amusement Park which consists of several parts as huge as kingdoms. The Leaping Lena (scenic railway) makes one shaky before one enters it. People amuse themselves by getting

sick, and it costs them lots of money. And all the stalls and stands. So many, many of them. We could stay there all our life, become old, and always find something new. And the hotels built with such a luxury that it hurts. You should be here!!

"Tonight, together with the older children, I'll attend a stage show and, imagine, the greatest living American actress is in it! A seat (one) costs \$3.50—about 11 marks. Such a grand thing never happened to me in my whole life. Jeremiah, my first play, cost only 50 pfennig. . . .

"Your loving daughter,

"Mary (formerly Marie)"

A few weeks later Mary had another experience and wrote her mother: "I have a great piece of news for you. On Tuesday I am going to live with a grand doctor's family. Dear Mama, you have no idea how nice it is there. Imagine, Mrs. K— (that's the name of the lady) has already bought me some dresses. Elegant! Mr. K— is also a dear. They live in one of the nicest hotels of New York on the 20th floor and this means a lot. The higher the floor where people live, the more money they have."

Not only the girls but also the boys were enthusiastic about the presents given them. One of the smaller boys wrote from Detroit: "Not often enough can I describe my good, good luck, and I have even left out this and that. Only a few days after my arrival, Aunt Anna told me to call them Uncle Walter and Aunt Anna, which of course I did. Uncle Walter is director of a factory. His one son is a

doctor. We have a colored man and a cook. Both sleep and live in the house. All my wishes are fulfilled. Most rich people are stingy, but not my foster parents, as you will see from what I write. For Saturday I have an invitation. The boy has been here a short time and has his birthday now. Aunt Anna bought a tie for \$1.50 for me to give him. Aunt Anna told me that I'd have to get a new white shirt. I showed her my shirts and, though I have a new and a good used one, she bought me another. Uncle Walter gave me two brand new English books. My bank account grows from day to day. Is it not simply grand? My parents will celebrate their anniversary on March 11th. A million kisses from your ever faithful and good, Thomas."

Another realist appreciated both kindness and presents. He wrote: "We drove to my new parents. At first the gentleman welcomed me with a 'happy to see you' and then the lady with a kiss. Exactly the way I had hoped it would be. They are so nice and dear to me, you wouldn't believe it. Everything I ask for, I get. I already got new knickerbockers and maybe I'll get a pair of rollers, because every boy here has at least rollers. At half past seven I get up with my brother. I call the people uncle and aunt. Then Howard my brother leaves for school."

"My birthday was very nice," wrote another lad. "I had to open the door all day long. In the evening there was a big party for dinner. There were 6 girls and 7 boys. It was wonderful. But not once did I behave badly or forget you. I received splendid presents. The first was a check for two dollars, then one dollar in cash. Also five beautiful ties, six handkerchiefs, an elegant pencil, one dark blue sweater with a high soft collar, a blue shirt with a stiff collar the way they wear them now, and a scarf pin. You see: grand presents!"

American schools impressed the young

strangers greatly. Wrote one boy: "The most important day arrived, Monday the fourth of February, our first schoolday in America. I have so much to tell you about it. Dear Aunt Martha drove with us to school, and we had to choose our subjects. Then a pupil was found who has the same subjects. We go with him all the time. Here special classes are unknown. But one has a study plan and for every lesson one runs to the room for the subject in question. From 11:30 to 12 there is lunch. This is wonderful. Either one brings sandwiches from home or one buys something, as the school has a kitchen. In this lunch room there are tables, chairs, and a counter as in a restaurant. There is one difference: no waiters. America is the land of self-service. One takes a tray, goes to the counter and orders whatever one wants and finds. One has a choice. Takes knife and fork, milk or cocoa, fruit or a sweet for dessert, and passes by the cashier who has one eye on the tray and his other on his change, before one can sit down. We have made many friends in school. We like it immensely. Another thing which is different from home: boys and girls are together in our school. Everything is beautiful, even the teachers."

Another wrote: "I can give you the happy news that I go to school. My English is very good. The people say: 'What, he has only been in America four weeks and speaks English so well!' Now let me tell you about the new school, because I know a whole lot about it. February 1 was my first real schoolday at Junior High School. The women teachers in my class are all very nice to me and say they want to help me as much as possible. The pupils are also nice. You will be surprised that I speak of females. Of course, there are men teachers, but the many women teachers are the surprise of my life. There are 2,700 pupils in school, almost four times as many as in the school at home. That

astonishes you, dear parents, does it not? Here one does not have to pay for school and the books are free."

"About a quarter of ten the head teacher led me to the class," wrote another boy. "One does not sit on benches here but at a table. First they all stared at me as if I were the eighth wonder of the world, but they soon got used to me. For all subjects, except arithmetic, we have female teachers. They are all nice to me and take pains to make me understand. I am in the fifth grade and sit beside an American girl who, of course, does not speak one German word, but all of them want to know what this or that word means in German and repeat it proudly but wrong. It really is great fun for me. In the first hour we had natural history and a very charming lady teacher. Every lesson another female appears. My God, so many females! This and another thing astonishes me greatly. Each of these females has her car and drives to school every day. Funny, isn't it? In the second lesson we had arithmetic and a real man teacher, very nice. He showed me some very easy sums, gave me a sheet of paper, and then I figured and figured the whole lesson. . . . Today I understood a little bit more but only a very little bit in school. It is grand, and little by little I become an American."

Sometimes critical voices were raised.

"Columbus and Edison were great men," ran one girl's letter, "but there is one unknown inventor whom I don't appreciate, the one who invented petting parties. In our high school they are popular. A boy I know invited me to go riding in his car. He asked me if I'd like to be his girl friend and, as all the other girls have boy friends, I said why not? A girl who

goes to a petting party will be kissed by her boy friend. When I was upset, the boy asked me if I knew of Plato. I thought of a book on the STATE which once I found in your library, dear parents, and I talked about it, but the boy thought Plato a bore. He was the father of Platonic love, he said, in which he did not believe. The attractive boys are all taken. Had I only come to this country earlier! But there is no justice in the world, not even in America, where, aside from petting parties, everything is wonderful."

But the words of praise outweigh the criticism. America is a wonderful new land of democracy and opportunity, and the schools are amazing. "For three days now I have attended Junior High School," wrote one boy. "America's schools are wonderful. For two reasons: 1) everyone, rich or poor, workman's or minister's son, can get an education here, because the schools are free. I even get the books for nothing. And 2) each teacher has to teach only one subject. That is a great advantage, because they have the opportunity to become experts. Moreover, there is no difference between teacher and pupil. The relationship is very chummy. All pupils—there are boys and girls in every class—are very nice to me and of a touching kindness. One of the girls told me she would like to sit next to me and help me in the afternoon. I am afraid I'll become her boy friend. Anyhow, I like it very much. America is grand!"

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*Dr. Margaret Jacobson came to this country in December, 1933, happy to be "in the land of freedom." She has written articles for various magazines on the readjustments of refugees to American life.*



## ADOBE PAY CHECKS

DOROTHY L. PILLSBURY

AT FIFTY, Miss Peals retired from social work in the slums of a west coast city. Topped with an arty beret, she settled down in the high mesa-land of the Southwest to dabble with her two dimensional little sketches and her tinkling music-box rhymes.

But the old social worker instincts persisted. Peals' eyes that had seen so much misery opened wider and wider. Here were three cultures, Indian, Spanish, and Anglo, mingling side by side in a tolerance that was spiked with appreciation.

For a long time Peals thought she had found the zenith of all good social workers' dreams. When the Indians came to town on market day, they took over the

down the long counter and around the little tables between shawl-wrapped, white-booted Indian women and slack-suited Anglos.

Peals' next door neighbors on her highly respectable street had names like Cordoba and Garcia and Espinosa. When she went to a beauty shop, as likely as not Carmen-cita Cordoba sweltered under the next dryer. The library was full of Spanish American children every day after school. Brown hands carried home to bookless adobes *Robin Hood* and the *Wizard of Oz* and *Little Women*.

The Anglos, in turn, went Spanish American in a big way. Their homes, their dress, even their mental processes had a



best ice cream place in town. Peals chuckled to see the Anglos squeezing themselves into left-over stray seats. She gloried in the neighborly chit-chat that buzzed up and

Latin flavor. Committees and leagues and societies there were for the greater appreciation and betterment of everyone. The artists painted and the musicians com-

posed and the writers flung their words around, all driven to a fine frenzy by the colorful cultures around them. "Charming people," the Anglos said of the Spanish Americans. "And how they do decorate the landscape. We're so fond of them."

Then Peals found herself working in Miss Snap's private employment office. By the next bus, Snap had staffed dude ranches, desert hotels, tourist shoppes and the kitchens of the elite for years on end. She was an institution. But war was changing her waiting room from a torrent of people all wanting jobs to a sluggish trickle of the old and the incompetent. With admirable foresight, Snap took herself off at the first smell of gunpowder. Clad in a gentlemanly, double-breasted slack suit, she made with unerring instinct for a personnel job in an airplane factory on the Coast. Hadn't she been hiring help for twenty years?

In a farewell meeting she outlined the war time policy of Snap's Employment Office to the dazed Peals. "Stop actin' so scared. There won't be hardly a thing for you to do, what with the government buttin' in on the employment business. You can sit right here at the desk and write that poetry of yours. All I want you to do is to hold my location and telephone number. Sure the employers'll call in. Kid 'em along."

Peals felt certain she was not the "kid 'em along" type. But what a chance she would have to find out if all the appreciation and all the societies for this and that penetrated to fair pay checks for Spanish American workers!

She sat day after day in Snap's strangely quiet office. She learned that in committee and artistic parlance the Cordobas and the Espinosas were "Spanish Americans," but on jobs they were "native help" with appropriate wages. Five dollars a week was

the usual wage for domestics. Some enthusiastic committee chairmen offered two and a half. The employers called and called, even as Snap had predicted. Little by little it dawned on the credulous Peals that all was not fiesta spirit in the bi-cultural Southwest. Frustrated employers exposed undreamed-of utilitarian garments beneath their cloaking serapes.

Mrs. Biggetts, who ran a small dude ranch, shrieked daily for help. Before Peals could get her beret off her gray curls of a morning, came Mrs. Biggetts' jovial voice. "Got any one down there that really wants to work?"

"No one right now, but I'll give you a ring." (Kid 'em along!)

"Be sure they're husky," the jovial voice continued. "None of these high-heeled little steppers trying to look like our American high school girls. Hours? Oh, I work right along with 'em. We stop when we get through. May be the middle of the afternoon. May be midnight. You know how this business is. And we pay six dollars a week and board 'em and that's twice what they're worth."

Peals wondered if her daily job seeker, Josefa de Soto, couldn't try Mrs. Biggetts' place. But to Mrs. Biggetts she said merely, "They're scarce, what with jobs on the Coast and allotments coming in from their folks in the Army."

"Phooey," roared Mrs. Biggetts. "They're sittin' on their fannies down in the Plaza, cooin' around with their boy friends from the Base. They don't want to work. Allotments! Well, if you want to call it that." She rattled a ribald laugh. "I hope," she bit off, "I hope to God, after this war is over, not one of 'em can ever get a job again. I hope every last one of 'em starves to death."

Peals was still gasping when the telephone whirled again. "Dear lady," began C. Charles Honeyman, "dear lady, I'm in a frightful predicament."

C. Charles was the town's cherished aristocrat, the aged survival of Territorial Days when virtue and integrity walked the sands of the Southwest.

"Oh, it isn't Miss Snap," he worried in his frail querulous voice. "Miss Snap knows my situation. She used to keep me well staffed with three or four girls. And so cheaply, too. But now all I ask is one to cook my simple meals and keep me tidied up. A child could do it. Just send me anyone."

"They're scarce," Peals repeated. Now here was a nice place for a girl—maybe Josefa—

"Indeed, indeed," agreed C. Charles. "Dear lady, last night I had an inspiration. If Miss Snap were here, she would act on it. Maybe you—you—ah—you probably know some good girl who isn't quite satisfied where she is. Maybe she would like a change. Now of course I couldn't approach a friend's maid. But suppose you offer such a girl a dollar more a week than she is making now. Say six dollars a week. Unheard of in this country! And we mustn't spoil our little native handmaidens. But in these trying times—"

"Ten dollars a week," bargained Peals, thinking of the neat job of maid stealing she was supposed to do and of C. Charles and his "native handmaidens."

Then Josefa de Soto teetered in, Josefa in her spotted silk skirt and Hollywood hair-do and her run-over heels. "Any 'ads'?" she inquired listlessly.

"I sent you on a nice easy job yesterday. What became of that? And the one the day before?"

"I didn't got it."

Always the same. Josefa "didn't got it."

"What about a nice place with Mrs. Biggetts? She works right with you."

"No," shrieked Josefa, coming suddenly alive. "Sure she works right with me. Like a burro driver with a nail in the end of a steak!"

"Or a fine place with a dear old gentleman?"

"Not Mr. 'Oneyman? Once I work for Mr. 'Oneyman. Fifteen rooms he has and all full of things. Not one afternoon off to see movies. Sit all dressed up in uniform to answer door bell. And *los pá joros!*"

"*Pá joros, pá joros?*" questioned Peals.

"You know." Josefa flapped her skinny arms and fluttered stiff-legged from desk to room corner.

"Oh, birds!"

"*Si, si, forty-eight,*" hissed Josefa. "All in cages, and night and day, Miss Peals, all doing you know what. *Madre de Dios!*"

Peals gave Josefa another of Snap's genteely engraved cards with another hopeful employer's name written in precise backhand under the date. Why did Josefa come every day asking "any ads" if she "didn't got" a single place?

Absently she walked over to the window that overlooked the main street. There was Josefa swinging her uneven skirt and her slim hips. And there were three soldiers closing in like hopeful moths. Suddenly the little cavalcade was scattered by the inopportune appearance of a military police. What was Peals' consternation to see Josefa open her red oilcloth purse and produce the sacred card of Snap's impeccable employment office. So that was why Josefa came for a daily card! What would Snap say?

No time to ponder. Mrs. Philander Bankey was at the desk. The Bankeys, outstanding in all the arts, were saturated with the spirit of the country. There wasn't a cultural or artistic project afoot that the Bankeys didn't foster, cherish, and underwrite.

"I'm needing three girls," Mrs. Bankey confided. "We understand these native people, my dear. Mr. Bankey insists on having them around for atmosphere. I humor him although I know they're not worth their salt for work. But we furnish

them very artistic costumes—mostly Indian. And it's an interesting life for them. They see so many distinguished people. Three dollars a week, room and board."

Peals knew she could get no one to work for the Bankeys even if they saw a thousand distinguished people. Not after Armendita Salazar's saga. "Those Bankeys, Miss Peals," Armendita had told her, crossing herself at highly dramatic moments, "ain't Católico and they ain't even Christian. Mornings they go up on the roof top and bang on Indian drum and sing. Mr. Bankey beats 'tombe' and Mrs. Bankey sing wha-wha-wha. They ain't got hardly no clothes on, Miss Peals. 'Armen-dita,' they say to me, 'wrap yourself in Indian blanket and make salud to the sun.' Miss Peals, I run two miles back to town and burn fifty cents worth of candles to Santa María de la Luz."

Later, Peals found herself saying firmly to a modulated executive voice over the 'phone, "No, no, Mrs. Toggenbrook, I can't get you dish washers to clean up after The Hands Across the Rio Grande cultural relations dinner at any twenty-five cents an hour. Yes, I know we used to, but it's fifty now and lucky if I can find them."

"I shall write Miss Snap," promised the executive voice. "We used to have the nicest relationships with our native help, but you, you have undone the work of years."

Peals shifted her attention to office help and let the region go maidless for awhile. Why couldn't native girls who had managed high school and business school get office positions? In response to a discreet advertisement in the evening papers, Luz Apodaca was waiting for the door to open next morning. Luz had everything—youth, good looks, and scholastic credentials. Peals hustled her off for an interview with the owner of one of the town's biggest businesses. He had been yelling for help all week.

Inside of ten minutes Luz was back. "He says the job is already filled."

Peals sent out six "native" girls that morning to six different help-howling employers. Miraculously, each job had been filled overnight.

One employer called her. "Look," he explained kindly, "I guess Miss Snap forgot to tell you. Don't send native girls out for white-collar jobs. It's embarrassing for them and for us. Of course we can't hire them. It—it isn't customary."

In a few days Luz was back. Gone was the trim, cheap suit and the neat business blouse. "Give me a housework job, Miss Peals. I've been all over town and they won't even see me when they hear my name. I might as well get me a rebozo and start out on day work with my apron



under my arm." She put her head down on Peals' desk and wept.

"Why," she sobbed, "why do they build high schools and coax us to graduate? Why do they fill their business schools up with us? If we can't get an office job, why do they kid us along?"

## ADOBE PAY CHECKS

"There's civil service and the wac," advised Peals. "I'll never give you a housework referral out of this office. And forget the rebozo. You've got to climb over this adobe wall."

It was poor old rebozo-draped 'Sabolita who involved Peals in high romance. 'Sabolita slipped cautiously into the office one day. Peals had to reach for her Spanish dictionary to piece out the few English words. *Si, si*, she had worked oh, *muchos* years for Señor and Señora Twitchems. They make *muchas músicas*. A fine place in the country. But *muchos* work. Up at four o'clock to milk the goats. Breakfast all morning. And *muchos* people, big dinners, dishes to wash at midnight. Five bath rooms, six fireplaces, washing and ironing. A cot to sleep on in the basement. And after all those years three-fifty a week!

The fame of the Twitchems' 'Sabolita had reached even Peals. 'Sabolita was the envy of a hundred square miles. She could cook American, but she took her pay "native." Three and a half a week! Peals reached for the telephone. An excited voice screamed in her ear.

"Of course I know 'Sabolita. The best cook in the country! Seventy-five dollars to start with and more if she stays with me. A little adobe house to live in. It has a nice bath and everything. And an eight-hour day. I know, I was planning to get a couple but I'll manage somehow. In heaven's name, send me 'Sabolita."

'Sabolita counted to seventy-five on her work twisted fingers. "Si, si," she promised, "I be back pronto." She wrapped the faded rebozo firmly under her chin and ran from the office.

She was back in a few hours, but not alone. "*Es Pantalones*," she explained, pushing a stooped, aged figure before her. "He speak no Engleesh. He work, *tambien*, for Señor Twitchem,—oh, *muchos* years,—make garden, chop wood, saddle horses, build fires. Three dollars a week they pay heem. He walk four miles over the hills every morning from his casita and back at night. If lady you talk to want couple and pay us like she say she pay me, we make couple. *Mañana* we marry in church. We wait *muchos* years."

Peals had but one worry. They looked a hundred years old. But at the six o'clock mass she saw a new 'Sabolita and a new Pantalones. Gone was the old limp rebozo. In its place was a flower pot hat with a flourish of veil to match the bright pink silk dress of the bride. There was Pantalones in a new blue suit. Barbered and white-shirted, he looked positively collegiate. "They're not old at all," Peals marveled. "They're barely middle-aged."

It was weeks later that Peals ran into Luz on the street, Luz trim and erect in her wac uniform. She grinned and gave her a snappy salute. "I did crawl over the high adobe wall," she laughed. "And there's a lot more of us who have done it. Don't expect us back after the war for housework jobs."

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Dorothy L. Pillsbury is a frequent contributor to CG, having staked out as her field the Spanish-Indian-Anglo culture of the Southwest.

The sketches are by Kurt Werth.

## DOUGHBOY AMBASSADOR

LETTERS FROM DICK MURRAY, PFC.  
TO HERBERT KUBLY

(Dick Murray was employed by a steel mill in Pittsburgh, where I was a newspaperman, when I first met him in August, 1941. A girl brought him to a party, a raucous affair with the usual music, smart talk, and alcohol. He was nineteen years old and looked younger. In the dim light and through the clouds of smoke he appeared rather like an etching of the Shropshire Lad of Housman's poems.

On August 24, 1942, Dick boarded a train for Camp Wheeler, Georgia, a member of the United States Army. During the intervening year I had come to know him extremely well. He wanted to be a writer and a farmer, though he had never lived on a farm and his education had ended when he was graduated from Crafton High School in Pittsburgh and he went to work at the mill. Now, though he has never been in New Glarus, the Swiss American community in Wisconsin which is my home, he has decided—after listening to me talk of it—that he will go out there to farm after the war. He is sending his war savings to the Bank of New Glarus to help pay for an agriculture course at the University of Wisconsin.

Dick is the third of four brothers—all of whom are now in the Army.

He is at least a sixth-generation American, with a typically melting-pot ancestry. His father is a mixture of German, English, Scottish, and Irish descent, and his mother, whose name is De Hart, has French and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors. There may be many soldiers who are contributing more to winning the war than Dick, but I doubt if there are many

doughboys who are spreading more human warmth, more kindness and laughter, and more American goodwill. H.K.)

October 3, 1943, England. I've just finished a weekend pass during which I met Roy Kingston in London. He's the Australian flight officer in the R.A.F. who was my friend in Camp Myles Standish back in Massachusetts. He telegraphed me his London address as soon as he arrived there, and we met for the first time since the States. We had great fun doing all the ordinary sight-seeing and stopping at as many pubs as we could. Big Ben is smaller than I expected.

Roy is through training and as soon as his leave is up he will be posted for combat flights. I took him some presents—a carton of American cigarettes, a cake of Lux toilet soap, and some of my candy and gum rations. Of course he is excited about getting into action. I'm a little worried for him—but I couldn't let him know that.

Of all the British service men, I find I like Aussies the best. They are very like us Americans.

March 13, 1944, North Ireland. Sunday night I went to a real Irish dance at some Catholic organization hall. Dancing was exclusively the old stuff and reminded me of barn dances in America, except that I have never seen girls swung about like this before except in circus acts. I had quite a time trying to catch on, and decided that next Friday night I would go to a class to learn. They were all country



folk with the exception of one fellow who was what might be called "dressed up." He had a slight tilt to his nose, pale cheeks, and lacked the outdoor rosiness of the other folk. With the principal of the school I discussed Irish school systems and job opportunities for kids of fourteen, which is the average age for them to go to work. There were only 10 G.I.'s present and they watched in a dazed manner. I learned that the civilians there were 100 per cent Catholic and that Protestants simply weren't permitted under any circumstances. I didn't tell them I was Presbyterian.

March 20. Today I rode a horse! I decided to go to church in the village Presbyterian Church, and just as I came dashing out of the orderly room (I was late as usual) I noticed a farmer with some horses. I rented one of them and went galloping off to church, arriving just in time for Communion.

After church I invited two Irish lads to have some tea with me and for several hours I learned about the politics of this vicinity. This is a Catholic district and the people have very strong pro-Free State feelings. The lads were most interested in knowing how much money they would make in America at jobs similar to theirs.

March 24. Tonight I went for the laundry at Mrs. McConkey's house—she does it for us. She had a small tea for me during which a girl came with her boy friend, and I asked her to show me the basic step of the *Celidhe* (not sure of the spelling—pronounced Kay-lee), which is the name for the Irish folk dancing I tried Sunday night. Now I'm one step to the good.

April 11. Tonight I must make a call at the farmer's house where I rented the horse. It was to have been in some race today, and I want to know how it ran.

April 15. Today I took the horse out on

the beach, for I was trying to get him to lift his feet higher when he walked and I thought he would have to do it in the sand. It was true, he did, but he didn't like it, and when I tried to remount I had a little difficulty with him. He knocked one of the stirrups off and when I was trying to figure where it was to be attached, he wouldn't stand still.

I finally got it on, and as I tried to mount he danced a good deal more, hopping around on his hind feet. This went on for some time, and then suddenly he bit me right in the fanny. That was enough! I got angry and started to assert myself. I procured a short twig and after both of us did considerable more dancing, I finally succeeded in mounting him.

I suppose he was a bit tired of carrying me around on his back. I think most of the horses here are Catholic, too.

April 17. Politics are all tied up with folk dancing here. On Saturday night I went to a dance and discovered it wasn't a *Celidhe* but a Protestant affair where they do different things. I met a very nice girl whose hands were not rough (she didn't work outdoors on her father's farm, she said). She told me she was engaged to a fellow and that I may not even call on her for an afternoon walk on Sunday. So I didn't bother much with her. I left with four R.A.F. fellows for some tea, but we decided instead to bob about for beers.

I will try to remember the *Celidhe* steps, so I can show them to Lila and you after the war. I think I can have some records of the music sent to you.

I have discovered there are lots of Murrys in both Ireland and in Scotland where our clan originated. We are descendants of the red-headed chieftain who gave his name to his clan.

April 24. Tonight at the *Celidhe* I was captured by some little Irish lassie who held onto me like glue. I finally got away

by asking her older sister to dance with me. She was a little more mature and not quite so silly.

My Uncle Chess has written me some of our family background. We are Lochie Murrays, and they came from about 10 miles outside of Aberdeen, Scotland. I shall try to get to Scotland to locate some of them. My great-great-great-grandfather came from there in 1793, and his name was Lochie Murray.

May 2. The horse that bit me is learning to like me, for he was very gentle tonight. I stopped at the cottage of one of the girls I danced with at the *Celidhe*. They were living in extreme poverty—the people here are either very rich or very poor. The mother of the family—there were six children and the parents living in two rooms—used to work as a maid for the lady of the castle in which we now live. She told me my office was once the master bedroom.

May 7. I have met some country cousins—at least they insist they are. They are a middle-aged brother and sister, Adeline and Cuthbert Murray, and they were at the *Celidhe*.

I also met "Aunt Agnes," an 80-year-old toothless spinster who rides several miles on a bicycle to the dances, where she is always in the center of a group of American soldiers. She keeps insisting we tell her about Jersey City, where she has a sister, and she's crazy about cowboy songs, but not many of us can sing them. I sing as many as I know. She also likes that mountain song, *The Last Letter*, that schmaltsy one you and I learned in West Virginia.

I was cornered by the older sister of the girl who attached herself to me two weeks ago. Then she saved me from her younger sister and now I'm looking for someone to save me from her. I'm getting so that

I can swing the gals pretty hard, and twice I threw them clear off the floor and had to set them up again while in motion. Some wee children did a difficult *Celidhe*. I fell for one of them—a cute little redhead, who had as much poise and grace as Danilova.

May 15. I had a weekend pass to Belfast. Saturday night I got pretty drunk with a nice lieutenant whose name is Brazelton. Sunday morning I remembered it was Mother's Day, and I got very lonely, so I went to the Red Cross and asked them for a mother to take to church.

They telephoned one for me and I went on a tram to pick her up. She was a very sweet lady of about 60, and we went to the Presbyterian Church where we met her husband who had just finished teaching Sunday School. However, they have no such thing as Mother's Day in Ireland and there was no mention of the day in the service.

At the church a Mr. Martin invited me to his house for dinner, where we had a splendid lamb roast with extraordinary mint sauce. Mr. Martin's housekeeper has relatives in America and she insists after the war she is coming to America to live. After dinner we went for a long walk in the country and met all the country folk with their prams and bicycles.

When I returned to camp, I picked a large bunch of wild flowers and arranged them in my helmet in the barracks for Mother's Day. I received a great many comments on this. A few of them were complimentary. I wish that I might have sent the whole thing to Mother intact, but since that was not possible, I could only pray that she might not feel too bad on this day. But I imagine she must feel awful, for on Mother's Day she always used to collect her flock under her wings, and this time three of her boys are off to war.

May 25. Perhaps the war has made some changes in me. In fact sometimes I think it has made me even more sympathetic for pain. For we're living in a death row and wondering whether the Governor will give us a stay of execution. We know we're innocent but the world doesn't and we wonder if the people of the world will find a solution before it is too late. In the meantime I found a little cockroach with a broken leg and I fixed it with a hair and a touch of chewing gum and placed him gently near the water drain, wishing him luck since he has not done me any harm.

June 3. I bicycled 20 miles out to Adeline and Cuthbert's for the weekend. I enjoyed myself discussing Irish farming with Cuthbert. They have 65 acres in long strip-like fields, and grow oats, potatoes, and flax. They have a small tractor and have sold all their horses. I had a great time eating lots of good food, but I was practically launched in tea. Everything I had except the tea and sugar were produced right there on the farm.

On my way back, I met up with two young fellows from Belfast, members of a cycling club, who were on their way to a youth hostel. I joined them and at the hostel we met a soldier from Tacoma, Washington, who had also joined the cycling club. We all had a tea at the hostel with many other cyclers and then we went swimming. I'm thinking of joining the club, too—it beats pubbing by far.

June 5. Last night I went to see an Irish-Frenchman—a M. Leduc—who lives nearby. He is the chauffeur of a wealthy lady who also has two maids and two gardeners. Her house and garden are completely hidden from public view by a 20-foot wall and vines and trees. M. Leduc is a veteran of the last war, and he met his mistress when she was his nurse in a hospital where he recovered from injuries. Her name is

Mrs. Davidson, and she promised to teach me French if I would come to her house for lessons. I shall certainly do so, for, who knows, I may get to use French quite soon.

June 14. Saturday evening after chow I went riding. Near the village I came across a little fellow who had hurt his finger. He was real brave and wouldn't cry in front of his little friends, but he couldn't stop the tears from rolling down his cheeks.

I asked him if he would take a walk with me to the corner. He agreed very shyly and we trudged off, his hand in mine. I asked him if there were any shops about where we might purchase a mineral (soda). He pointed one out and in we went to a dirty joint with a lassie behind the counter. We got the minerals and a bag of cookies. I also bought some band-aids, and, after washing his finger, I put one over the sore. I made him promise to wash his hands and put a clean one on each time his finger became dirty. He promised he would do it for me. When we stepped into the road again, all his little chums were waiting nervously outside. He quickly shared his cookies with them. I liked that. He'll be a good fellow one of these days.

Monday evening, Armand Dellavolpe (he's from Long Island) and I went to Mrs. Davidson for our first French lesson. It went extremely well, and I understood a great deal of what was said. She complimented us by having her maid serve "American coffee," which was punk ersatz stuff. She's somewhat of a connoisseur of cigarettes and offered us some Russian ones.

Last night I went for a long walk, for I had had a letter returned to me by Air Board Orders which I'd sent to Roy Kingston, my Australian cobbler, on March 11th. I'm afraid something has happened to him. Roy and I were going to

spend a lot of time together after the war—I wanted you to meet him—and he was going to visit us on the Wisconsin farm.

*July 24, France.* Tonight I visited a small Catholic church and on my way I visited with a girl who was milking cows (the cattle are very handsome here). I offered to help. This is only the second time that I have milked a cow. I did well, however, for she complimented me. They milk differently here than in Pennsylvania.

She offered me a bit of Normandy cheese, and it was extremely good—made me think of the cheese we had two years ago in Helvetia, West Virginia.

Our bunk these days (Corporal Carlson, a good guy, is with me) is a foxhole, and we have a sort of tent pitched over it. We've had considerable trouble with the cows falling in on us.

*July 25.* My friend, Roy Kingston, was reported missing over Leipzig in a flight last month. Today I also had a letter returned that I had sent to Flight Sergeant Johnny Thyer two months ago. He was Roy's closest pal and also my friend. The noise of guns is almost continual in our ears and seems quite friendly. It is when they stop that I become frightened.

*July 27.* On the way to church I met a French farmer boy on a huge white draft horse with just stirrups and a blanket patch. Yep, you guessed it! I rode the horse to church and thanked the boy.

*July 28.* Some civilians are inviting me and two sergeants to dinner on Sunday. They are killing a calf and want us to enjoy it with them. We have been doing them little favors and they appreciate them—such as giving them bits of sugar and coffee and some of our cigarette rations.

*August 2.* On Sunday Madame Cambron had a wonderful dinner for us. The veal was delicious and the string beans were

divine, if you can imagine it. The French know what to do with vegetables. We had some very old wine and after-dinner coffee, raisins and calvados—a very strong distilled cider which the newspapers call “Jersey Lightning.”

Madame Cambron—an aged grandmother who has been an invalid for twenty years—presented me with a rare 5-franc piece dated 1870. It's about the size of a silver dollar and carries the visage of Napoleon III. She has kept it for thirty years because they are so rare.

*August 17.* The day before yesterday was Assumption Day and they made quite a fete of it here. Their procession was colorful with nuns wearing burgundy robes and little girls wearing white veils. There was a wonderful old countess, and I asked her daughter—also a countess—if I might escort her mother to the concert scheduled that evening by our band. She sent a little girl into the chapel where her mother was yet praying, and while we waited I told her that my French great-great-grandfather was also a count—I gave her his name—and she exclaimed, “Oh, then we must be cousins as I'm also related to him,” and she added, “The present Marquis lives quite closely here and you must meet him.”

I suggested that we first check the lineages in a book of French nobility, but she told her mother of her discovery when the old countess came from the church and she also seemed extremely pleased. Both the mother and daughter came to the concert with me.

Last night I had a date to promenade with the Grand Dame (old countess) at 6. She brought with her one of her grandsons, a young count. They corrected my French, and I'm getting rather fair with the language.

There are always kids in the park. In England they said to us, “Got any gum,

chum?" Here in France it's always, "Cigarettes pour papa?"

September 4. Tonight one of my French friends brought me some wonderfully ripe pears. The other night his father and mother gave me and another fellow three bottles of wine from their wine ration. They have invited me for a long visit after the war. They live in a city five miles away, but each night they cycle out to their country home to escape the bombings.

The younger countess confided to me the other day that she is quite worried about taxes after the war. She was extremely attractive in her jodphurs and sub-deb blond hair. She wasn't sporting her riding crop as an affectation—she really arrived on a horse.

September 25. I understand that we may now mention some of the places that we have been in the past month and which I have referred to in my letters. It was in Montebourg where I found a little Jean d'Arc medal that I wear with my dog tags and other medals. In Blay I met the old grandmother who gave me the precious 5-franc piece that I still keep for fear if I mailed it to you it might get lost. The countess that I may be related to and with whom I went walking lives in Vitre, and it was there that I got the old, old inkstand that I sent home to you. In Chartres I met a wealthy farmer who lent me his beautiful chestnut mare with a brand new saddle and trimmings. It was my last day there, and he said it was a pity I wasn't to be there longer for I might ride the mare every day.

I was in Paris and it's so beautiful! But I guess I expected something like the Empire State Building in the Eiffel Tower. It disappointed me slightly.

September 30. I smoked a French cigar the other day—it had been cached for the four years of occupation and was quite strong. I got it at the home of the Mayor of the village we are near now. He had invited me to dinner, and the cooking, as usual, was wonderful. There were white and red wines and cognac. They gave me and a buddy a bottle of champagne which had been purchased years ago by two sons of the family to save for a toast when the occupation ended. The two youths have been executed by the Gestapo, so they gave the champagne to us two Americans—the liberators—to drink a toast to victory now that the occupation is over.

The Mayor said it made him and his family happy to give the champagne to us. And that in drinking the wine—which had through death come to symbolize the sons—we would become his sons, his American sons, who had helped bring about that for which his sons had died.

When we left he said, "Farewell, my American sons," and he begged us to come and visit him when we return from Germany when the war is over. We said we would. I want to visit him again and I want to visit the countess in Vitre and Madame Cambon in Blay and Adeline and Cuthbert and Aunt Aggie in Ireland. Once in a while I even pray I will one day visit Roy Kingston in Melbourne.

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*Herbert Kubly, author of the recent Broadway play, Men to the Sea, will be remembered by CG readers for two previous articles in its pages on the Swiss American community of New Glarus, Wisconsin. He is editing the letters of Dick Murray with a view to possible book publication.*

## • Miscellany •

AS ONE WAY of widening group understanding, the Common Council in October and November sent Langston Hughes to some 25 high schools in the New York area to spend a day in each school—speaking in assemblies and reading his poetry, and later talking informally in English and social science classes. A world traveler, versed in many languages and cultures, internationally known as a poet and playwright, Mr. Hughes has great personal charm and a sane and broad understanding of the problems of color the world over. In most schools his visit climaxed or was integrated with various projects of study: poetry, discussions of race relations and the extension of democracy, local problems such as housing, the history of the Reconstruction, etc. In many towns his visit served as a link between community and school, PTA and adult groups being brought into the picture. In one town some fifty of the community's leading colored citizens were invited in to sit on the stage and hear Mr. Hughes. The visits were in a measure co-operative undertakings, for while the Council paid Mr. Hughes for these appearances, it asked the schools to stand the expenses of transportation and meals and lodging.

Everywhere the response to the project was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. "Not in years have we had a speaker received with such enthusiasm," is typical of the general reaction. "We feel his day with us did more for interracial understanding than we could have done ourselves in many months," wrote one high school principal. "He has made a profound impression here," an English teacher wrote, "not only because of his charm and talent, which of course are great, but especially because of his apparent freedom from resentment and bitterness against the oppressors of his

people. It is his power to tolerate our intolerance in the hope that one day even we too shall awake which is so breathtaking and so challenging. It is impossible to estimate how deeply he has enriched our lives and stirred our souls to action. What a privilege for an obscure industrial town." "I want to report that I made it a point to hear Langston Hughes at our high school assembly yesterday morning," said a school superintendent, "and that I thought it was one of the finest high school assembly programs I have ever experienced. . . . I am sure that all present felt that something good had come into their lives as a result of hearing Mr. Hughes read his poetry and tell the story that lay back of it."

Considerable interest was aroused in the project as an educational method to be used further. Wrote one principal: "I am convinced that one of the best ways to improve interracial understanding is to bring before the young people outstanding members of both races. Speeches and discussions about interracial understanding too frequently do not get very far. However, Langston Hughes, because of what he is able to do, helped to develop among the white students greater respect for Negroes, and I feel certain that he helped to stimulate a feeling of self-respect among the colored students." In similar vein came another letter: "This experiment held a two-fold interest to me. Besides the immediate objective that doubtless you had in mind, I was also interested in it as a general method of approach on all minority questions. I am now convinced, more than ever, that this is a really sound method from an educational standpoint, and I would be interested in trying it again from the standpoint of other minority groups." "It is too bad you do not



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have at least three men of his type to give their full time talking throughout the schools of the nation," wrote another principal. "Here is the real hope for racial understanding, as the adult mind is already set in its ideas, and it is almost impossible to remove prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance after it has been formed." [*If the Common Council can raise the funds for a continuation and extension of this project, it will find those "full time" "three men."* Ed.]

Mr. Hughes' tour began with a week in Philadelphia at the express invitation of the Board of Education, which used his visit as the first move in a new program of bettering intercultural and interracial understanding there, in its own variation of the famous "Springfield Plan." New Jersey schools included in the tour were Camden, Burlington, Montclair, Ridgewood, Rutherford, Englewood, Thomas Jefferson High in Elizabeth, A. J. Demarest High in Hoboken, Central High in Paterson, and Central, Arts, and Barringer High Schools in Newark. New York schools included Mount Kisco, White Plains, Peekskill, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, and Wadleigh High in New York City. One Connecticut school was also on the schedule—Central High of Bridgeport.

FROM HELEN PAPASHVILY, when we wrote to say that postponement of publication of their book from October 25th to January 2 gave us a chance to run "To Be Happy Married" in the Winter CG, came this letter:

"This is wonderful. Our story can end as all good stories should—so they married and lived happy ever after. [*Though there are many more chapters in the book.* ED.]

"Yesterday was a very exciting day. The editor of the paper who is a customer of mine [*Helen Papashvily runs the Moby Dick Bookshop in Allentown*] has wanted

to do a piece about us and the Book-of-the-Month Club and so I said go ahead, and he had huge pix with a two column spread. My phone started ringing at seven a.m. yesterday, the time I come in, and I had calls from everybody from my window cleaner man to the college librarian. Afterward, about 8:30, when I went across to the little place where I go to drink coffee every morning, the whole gang was lined up to wish me well and shake hands very formally. It was really grueling—kind of like a good old Irish wake. Then when I went back in the shop, there was a constant procession of people—some of whom peeked in the door and some who came in and bought a book while they looked at me—I never sold so many 25c books in one day in twenty years—and some just came in and said "I want to see what you look like"—looked me over in a thoughtful way and went out. Also 4 young ladies and 1 man who want to write—also 2 insurance salesmen; 1 real estate; 1 man to sell me an ad in the phone book that shall say under my pix that I won the Book-of-the-Month. About 3 p.m. the florist staggered in under a bouquet of chrysanthemums and oak leaves and snap-dragons and trailing vines with a card that said To George and Helen Moby Dick and, when I opened it, read From your friends and neighbors on Sixth Street that you drink coffee with every morning.

"That was the most exciting thing that has happened to me since you took 'The Sound of Home.' I was absolutely flattened. When I asked Margaret, the nice girl in the luncheonette, whom to thank, she said—Oh, I could never tell you: Tick and Fred Guth, the mailman, and Mr. Horn from the wholesale drygoods (who I didn't know even knew I was alive) and Millie upstairs and the man that reads the gas meter and me and all the men in the American Store and Alvin from the butch-

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er shop, and Ella, and Mr. Raymond, and Mr. Glickman from the garage. If this is what it means to have a public, it's wonderful—only very frightening and sad at the same time.

"Then all afternoon they came in to see their flowers and they all looked them over very carefully and said—Not bad. It's a real pretty bouquet for this time of year—and we were all so happy and proud of each other that it ached.

"George meantime had a wonderful time in the factory. The other mechanic and the girls all teased him and cut out the story and put it on the bulletin board, and in the afternoon the boss wandered in to the factory and asked who was George Papashvily and shook his hand.

"Lots of fun. Now I've got 3 stories ready for you. Shaking all the bones of all my ancestors. One about Uncle Andy and one about Gramma and one about my great-great-grandfather when the world almost ended up in Paddocks Village, Vermont. I'll send them soon."

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS of American Indians was launched in mid-November at a meeting in Denver attended by representatives of fifty American tribes. An all-tribal constitution, probably the first in the history of the United States, was adopted by the delegates and will now be referred back to the tribes. The purposes of the Congress as stated in the preamble to the constitution are to enlighten the public on Indian affairs, preserve Indian cultural values, adjust tribal affairs, and preserve the rights guaranteed in treaties between the tribes and the Federal government. Specific activities planned by the group include a legislative representative in Washington, a news bureau to keep tribes informed on Indian affairs, an in-service training program for Indian employees of the Indian Bureau, a legal aid department, etc. A council will be set up

consisting of 3 executive officers and 8 members.

THE NEGRO FAMILY in search of good housing is usually a good economic risk, the National Association of Real Estate Boards reports as a result of a survey of the Negro housing question. As a class, the colored home owner meets his payments faithfully—often more faithfully than other groups at the same economic level. The survey was made by local real estate boards in 18 representative cities. The Association has recently launched a move to encourage better housing for Negroes and announces it is developing its program as a business matter and is not approaching the question from a reform standpoint. The NAREB stated further that a majority of realtors with colored housing experience reported there is no reason why insurance companies should not purchase mortgages on properly located and managed property to be occupied by colored people.

"LET'S PLAY FAIR," a series of radio scripts, is offered to schools and group leaders by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, free of charge. They are designed to promote better understanding among people of all faiths and racial backgrounds. Each play is 15 minutes long and cast principally for teen-age actors. Address Department R, National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16.

CG READERS who recall Alphonse Henningburg's college barber shop experience in his article "Two Worlds," Spring 1944, will be interested in a project launched recently in Oberlin, Ohio. An interracial barber shop has been set up, owned by both colored and white persons, as a result of the refusal of local shops to serve both races last spring. Oberlin faculty members

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were the spark-plugs for this venture. The first barber (another nice note) is Jerry Matzueri, a Japanese American who formerly worked in an interracial shop in Oakland, California.

IN CONNECTION with Sara Bloch's article in the last issue of CG, "Youth Crusades for a Better Democracy," comes this note from the Forerunners: "The Forerunners are not a pacifist group, even though they do believe that love must be included in the democratic philosophy with which they approach the peace. The Forerunners do not take a stand on the war as such, if only because as high school young people they are still in the process of exploring what their attitudes toward such evils as war should be." The organization provides a medium whereby young people are able "to function in a student group that is neither militaristic nor dominated by groups who have a stake in the status quo so far as race, economics, and other items are concerned. We have tried to keep the organization objective, and have not propagandized for any particular point of view on the war."

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING items to come to the CG desk is *Gung Ho*, a small mimeographed sheet published by the 407th Service Squadron "somewhere in India"—Corporal William Hoy, former West Coast newspaperman, editor. The squadron is evidently composed of many Chinese Americans, and issue after issue of the paper publishes accounts of forums in which the problems of Chinese Americans in the United States—present and postwar—are discussed seriously and intelligently, there on the war front in

India. This picture somehow warms our hearts—a group of Chinese Americans fighting for the United States in India, taking time out to discuss their problems and opportunities in the land to which they will return—their and our America.

THE PEOPLES OF AMERICA SERIES to be published by Lippincott under the general editorship of Louis Adamic has announced the volumes it now has in preparation. Three CG authors are included in this group: D'Arcy McNickle, who will do the Indian book—*They Were Here First*; J. Saunders Redding, who will do the book on the Negro—*They Came in Chains*; and Carey McWilliams, who will write the Mexican volume—*They Came From Mexico*.

Other titles and authors announced now are *They Came From Italy* by Frances Winwar; *They Came From Ireland* by Joseph Dinneen; *They Came From Czechoslovakia* by Joseph S. Roucek; *They Came From Hungary* by Emil Lengyl; *They Came From Armenia* by Arthur Derounian (John Roy Carlson); and *They Came From Japan* by Bradford Smith.

THE SLEEPY LAGOON CASE (see Autumn 1944 Miscellany) came to a triumphant conclusion a few weeks ago when the 12 defendants of Mexican extraction in the "Sleepy Lagoon" murder were released from jail. District Attorney Howser of Los Angeles County requested dismissal of the charges against the boys as no new evidence had been uncovered, and dismissal was granted. The District Court of Appeals had earlier held that the evidence presented in the lower court was insufficient to warrant a conviction of guilty.

# • The Pursuit of Liberty •

CONDUCTED BY MILTON R. KONVITZ

## NATURALIZATION OF ENEMY ALIENS

RECENTLY Federal District Court Judge William C. Coleman, of Baltimore, stated that he would not permit enemy aliens to become American citizens while the war is on. He made this statement in naturalization cases brought by five persons, among them a rabbi, a woman whose husband is serving in the United States Army, and a woman who has been accepted by the war subject to her obtaining citizenship. The reason given by the judge for his refusal to act on the applications was that the residence in these cases was too short to enable the petitioners or the judge to say that they had formed a real and stable attachment to this country and its institutions.

The evidence in the cases, entirely uncontradicted, showed that the petitioners are of good moral character and attached to the principles of our government. All requirements had been completely complied with, and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service recommended that the petitioners be naturalized.

It was shown that within the past several years 188,700 enemy aliens had been accepted for naturalization in about 2,000 courts throughout the country. A judge of the State of Washington and the Baltimore judge have been the only ones who have refused to conform to the law and regulations.

The Nationality Code provides that enemy aliens may be naturalized if their declarations of intention were filed at least two years before the beginning of the state of war, or if they were entitled to naturalization without making a declaration of intention, or if their petitions

were pending at the beginning of the state of war. Were it not for this statutory provision, it may well be that Judge Coleman was within his rights in postponing action on the petitions until after the war; but this act of Congress expressly gives enemy aliens, if they show conformance with the requirements, the right to become American citizens.

Let it be noted that *naturalization is a right*. Mr. Justice Brandeis, in *Tutun v. United States*, pointed out that, while the Constitution does not confer upon aliens the right to naturalization, it does authorize Congress to establish a uniform naturalization rule; and once Congress adopts a naturalization act, "there is a statutory right in the alien to submit his petition and evidence to a court, to have that tribunal pass upon them, and, if the requisite facts are established, to receive the certificate. . . . In passing upon the application the court exercises judicial judgment. It does not confer or withhold a favor." So, too, in *United States v. Schwimmer*, Mr. Justice Butler said: "Every alien claiming citizenship is given the right to submit his petition and evidence in support of it. And, if the requisite facts are established, he is entitled as of right to admission."

In naturalization proceedings, then, the court must follow the statute and may not alter the prescribed requirements. The court does not enjoy an arbitrary discretion; it may not impose additional qualifications or conditions. The judge must exercise legal, as distinguished from arbitrary or personal, discretion.

Judge Coleman continued the cases to some indefinite future time, though he

heard all the evidence. He refused to grant or deny naturalization, and so made an appeal impossible; for an appeal may be taken only from a final order. Counsel for the petitioners has, however, applied to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for a writ of mandamus, which, if granted, will compel the District Court judge to take final action on the petitions. While the discretion of the lower court may not be directed by the appellate court, the lower court may be ordered, by the writ, to perform its legal duty to pass on the merits of the cases pending before it.

Judge Coleman stated that, since the petitioners were refugees who had come to this country under great emotional stress, it was impossible for them or him to say that they had formed a stable attachment to our principles of government. In his application for the writ of mandamus, the attorney for the petitioners well pointed out that "individuals

who have been subjected to persecution and hardship in the country of their origin would seem, from a commonsense view, to be capable of keener appreciation and perhaps even greater attachment to the benevolent principles of our institutions than those who have never had to endure such painful experiences."

(On November 10 the Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the applicants for naturalization were entitled to a writ of mandamus requiring Judge Coleman to act on their petitions. The appellate court said the fact that the refugees had fled persecution was not a reason for viewing with suspicion their attachment to the Constitution but rather a reason for treating their declaration of attachment as made in good faith. The court also said that those who qualify under the act of Congress are entitled to citizenship "as a matter of right, not as a matter of grace." Ed.)

## EXCLUSION OF ALIENS

RECENTLY the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars called for a radical change in American immigration policy. The former voted opposition to immigration when 1,000,000 or more are unemployed in the United States; the latter favored stopping immigration for a ten-year period after the war. These resolutions make relevant the question of the power of Congress to stop immigration completely for a limited period or permanently. While that power is today generally conceded, the constitutional basis for it is still not clearly defined.

It is to be noted that until 1875 Congress consistently followed the open-door policy. Until then the doors at our ports of entry were wide open. The Act of 1875 excluded only convicts and pros-

titutes. We had no general immigration law until 1882; and this law added to the excludable classes lunatics, idiots, and persons unable to take care of themselves without becoming a public charge. That year saw the passage also of the first Chinese Exclusion Act. Thus it can be seen that the right to exclude groups of aliens was not exercised by Congress until the last quarter of the 19th century.

The assertion of the right to exclude aliens did not pass unchallenged. The Constitution does not expressly vest the right in Congress; and in 1868, only fourteen years before the passage of the first Chinese Exclusion Act, a treaty between the United States and China spoke of "the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance."

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The treaty also spoke of "the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects respectively from the one country to the other for purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents." In 1868 the United States government recognized the existence of the *right of free migration and emigration*, and of the *inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance*; but in 1882 it adopted an act which barred a people from entry into this country solely because of their race.

In 1888 the *Chinese Exclusion Case* came before the Supreme Court. A Chinese laborer had lived in San Francisco for twelve years, when he left for China, having in his possession a certificate entitling him to return to the United States. The certificate was issued pursuant to acts of Congress. After a short visit he returned and presented his certificate. He was told that seven days before his arrival (while he was on the Pacific Ocean) Congress had passed an act revoking all outstanding certificates and abrogating his right to re-enter. He challenged the act in the courts. He was held not entitled to enter. The Supreme Court upheld this decision.

The highest court held that an act of Congress may over-ride express provisions of treaties; and legally the foreign power could do nothing about that: China can protest to the President, said the Court, "or resort to any other measure which, in its judgment, its interests or dignity may demand."

Congress, held the Court, may exclude aliens. This power of exclusion of foreigners is an incident of sovereignty, part of the powers delegated by the Constitution.

The Court added, however, that treaties do protect property rights; the abrogation or expiration of a treaty will not

affect vested property interests. To hold otherwise, with respect to property rights, said Mr. Justice Field, would be "most mischievous."

Human rights did not weigh as much, obviously, in the minds of the Justices: the appellant's property rights, if any, would be protected, but the fact that he had lived here for twelve years, and left with a certificate of re-entry in his pocket, and may have had a wife and children in the United States, may with impunity be disregarded.

In the later case of *Turner v. Williams* Clarence Darrow and Edgar Lee Masters argued before the Supreme Court that the Federal government is one of only delegated powers, and the powers not delegated are reserved to the people or the states. They challenged the Court to point to a specific grant of power to Congress to exclude aliens. The Court said: "Whether rested on the accepted principle of international law that every sovereign nation has the power, as inherent in sovereignty and essential to self-preservation, to forbid the entrance of foreigners within its dominions . . . ; or on the power to regulate commerce," Congress does possess the power to exclude aliens.

In view of the fact that this claim of power rests on ground extrinsic to the Constitution, or on a liberal construction of the commerce clause, the least that the Supreme Court should have done was to impose necessary restrictions on the exercise of that power, so that human, as well as property, rights would be protected. As the law stands today, Congress may exclude all aliens, or any group or groups of aliens, on any ground whatsoever, or on no ground at all. Although the powers of Congress are in theory exclusively constitutional, the matter of immigration rests within the arbitrary, and not legal, discretion of its members.



## • The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

### FOR THE REAL AMERICAN TRADITION

**PREJUDICE: JAPANESE-AMERICANS.** By Carey McWilliams. Boston: Little, Brown. 337 pp. \$3

No one reading the title and subtitle, *Japanese-Americans, Symbol of Racial Intolerance*, could guess how absorbing a work this would prove to be, or how vitally linked with every major social problem of the entire United States. For the real American spirit and the tradition of Emerson, Thoreau, and Lincoln has been put to the test recently in one large section of this country—a section equal in area to all of Japan proper—and has been found wanting. All down the West Coast existed a deep social rift of anti-Oriental feeling. Hence the upthrust of prejudice after 1941, dislocating a large part of the population and releasing hate-fear complexes that have not died down. Readers of this dispassionate and admirably documented account will learn how a false ideology grew up, was purposely augmented, never allowed to die out; of the share a nativist organization had in the propagation of it, of the appalling part played by politicians out for power and votes. By these processes, un-American forces played directly into the hands of fascist Japan. Injustice, mob-violence, discrimination here—all were transmuted into hate in Japan for America as a whole, and as an excuse for added armaments and fleets. Mr. McWilliams does not exonerate the power party of Nippon. He deplores the chauvinism that helped it lay its train for the events of 1941, killed liberalism as a force in Japan, and helped to poison the mind of the people both there and here.

There were traits in the first generation Japanese Americans, the Issei, that made it hard for them to be assimilated and well liked. Granted. But the second generation, the Nisei, maturing in 1940, had largely outgrown these traits and attitudes, had turned from the parental mores and were and are discovering the real American tradition. They have met the test of loyalty under conditions that have deeply tested their faith. Said Sergeant Ben Kuroki, after 29 flights over Hitler's Europe: "I shall never become bitter or lose faith; for I know that those persons [who help breed fascism] are not representative of the majority of the American people."

It is up to America to right the wrong done this group and join hands with Japanese Americans to make real the American tradition.

*Foreign Influences in American Life*, edited by David F. Bowers (Princeton. \$3), offers expert aid in renewal of truly American attitudes and the rebuilding, if need be, of a tradition which has been corrupted, not by "foreign influences," as many suppose, but by ill-grounded fear or prejudice and by failure to understand the social processes involved. Seven highly competent authors discuss phases of the subject. Clear definitions of the terms used clear the way for understanding. Pivotal to this issue is the point that culture is not biological—is not a racial characteristic; nor are the mental attitudes and loyalties that go with an imported (immigrant) culture inherited signs or stigmata of a given race. This confusion, as McWilliams showed repeatedly in his volume, is responsible for much of the

bigotry observed on the West Coast. Further, the "radicalism" thought to prevail among immigrant groups is a myth. The overwhelming majority are conservative. A neglected fact is that those who arrived before 1880 are now completely absorbed, indistinguishable from older stock. Later comers will fuse similarly—so far as cultural character is concerned. Realization that skin pigmentation and eye-slant do not make a person hopelessly alien or subhuman is a hurdle no enlightened citizen need find difficult to take. Real foreign influence, these authors show, stems from artists, thinkers, writers who have studied abroad.

The University of North Carolina Press asked fourteen nationally prominent Negroes to contribute to the volume, *What the Negro Wants*, edited by Rayford W. Logan, dean of Howard University (Chapel Hill. \$3.50). The calm, dispassionate consideration required for such a discussion characterizes these papers. Yet the publisher, W. T. Couch, takes issue with their agreement on one point—the need to end segregation. He challenges the sociological and anthropological views of scientists like Myrdal, in an amazing argument, the effect of which fades as we proceed to the actual contents of the volume and observe the breadth, scope, and profundity of the treatment the fourteen contributors give this hydra-headed issue of social and civic equality for the Negro. "What the Negro wants" is most succinctly answered in Editor Logan's caption for his own paper: "The Negro Wants First-class Citizenship." The reasons why he wants and rightfully claims this, the catalog of effects induced by the denial of it, the case for dethroning a prejudice that bodes only more disaster while it rules in politics and industry—these, and a background of cultural knowledge that would shame most Congressmen if they knew

of it, make the work as a whole a monumental expression. Of what? Of enlightenment; of civilized thinking. No color line there. But, as George Schuyler submits in his paper, this is primarily a "Caucasian problem." The Negro did not make it. If the "superior" race can divest itself of myth and fixation, if it can disavow its hoary rationalizations and deal with itself honestly, the problem is solved. These writings are not propaganda but munitions—for the arsenal of Democracy.

In *Probing Our Prejudices* (Harper. \$1) Hortense Powdermaker of Queens College brings her theme within the compass of a high school unit. For coping with a great menace to America's future, nothing could be more timely than this clear and kind presentation of the truth about race prejudice—what it is, how it originates, grows, and can be checked. Not born in us, this acquired characteristic easily becomes a fixed trait—is itself cultural, like the supposed "racial" characteristics so widely attributed to alien-born persons and to their children. The effects of that error are doubled when we deem our own dislikes ineradicable and the objects ineradicable too. This brief manual will be a boon to all who strive to make the true ideals of America become real.

Marie Syrkin, out of her own intensive experience as a teacher in a metropolitan area, brings to the fore such actual situations as must be faced. Her title, *Your School, Your Children* (L. B. Fischer. \$2.50), shows plainly to whom the book is addressed. While our schools are, collectively taken, "the most impressive educational plant in the world" and long considered the guarantee of democracy's existence, they prove far from effective in support of democratic faith. Other influences too often outweigh what is taught and passively received in the schools. Instances here recorded are numerous; some may shock any reader unfamiliar with the

facts. (CG readers have been made familiar with anti-Semitism and Jim Crow in the classroom through Miss Syrkin's articles in its pages, articles which now appear as chapters in this volume.) Not the whole defeat of the school's aims comes from outside influences. Some of it has crept into the system itself. Miss Syrkin cites the use of vocational schools as dumping grounds for low I.Q. pupils; and of the "promotion by age" policy which passes pupils along (in order to "avoid the shock of failure") in promotions they have not earned. This practice she describes as making a pedagogic doctrine of our evasions and she suggests remedies with cogent force.

Tennessee-born and white, Claude Williams, whose story is told in *A Faith to Free the People*, by Cedric Belfrage (Dryden Press. \$2.75), became the champion of labor and the Negro—a fact incredible to the planters and bosses whom he fought. An exciting book, author Belfrage has made it a key document in the annals of a great war against racism and entrenched privilege that must involve the whole world before it is won.

Many believe that only the southern colored vote is restricted by the poll tax. Jennings Perry, in *Democracy Begins at Home* (Lippincott. \$3), dispels this error.

True, the struggle for white supremacy is involved, but not always crucial. As first framed, the tax was for revenue. Converted by state law into a vote-tax hedged with penalties—all back payments required for this year's vote—and manipulated by the bosses who buy what votes they need and intimidate other would-be voters, it becomes a restriction also on the white vote in all underprivileged sections. Hence the percentage of eligible votes cast in Tennessee dropped from 71 percent in 1888, before poll-tax became vote-tax, to 30 percent in 1932, and remained there, thanks to the bosses. The epochal four-year fight of one newspaper, the Tennessean, told by its editor, Jennings Perry, makes high drama, with a backdrop of politics as devious as any in the history of supposed Democratic government.

In the title poem of his first book of verse, *Rendezvous With America* (Dodd, Mead. \$2), Melvin B. Tolson catches the width and depth of the American dream. Long-time CG readers will remember it well from the Summer 1942 issue. Here is a rich collection of poetry, sometimes difficult but always rewarding. Mr. Tolson speaks from a deep sense of oneness with all human-kind in its age-old struggle against oppression "Toward the Promised Land of Tomorrow!"

## NEWS OF THE PEOPLE

"Folksay," as Ben Botkin has named it, comes before newsprint and lasts longer. It tells things the way people like to have them told and so it lives—news of the people. B. A. Botkin, who edits *A Treasury of American Folklore* (Crown. \$3), is now president of the American Folklore Society and has been deep in this lore and

his collections of folksay since 1929. The 932 pages of this six-part anthology, further grouped according to theme and treatment, are all that a student or fancier of frontier tales, songs, and tall-talk could ask—a little library in itself.

An interesting example of people who live wholly by folkways are men in a far-

## COMMON GROUND

away island of the East Indies. In *The People of Alor* (University of Minnesota Press. \$7.50), Cora Du Bois gives us a research study of this group which is ruled wholly by folklore, legends, and magic.

We have long known that American Negro poetry had a folk flavor and that the spirituals had a depth and dignity that ranked them above most other folk-song. New to many is the fact that folk lyrics are now being written that have all the quality and spontaneity of the great slave-day creations (authors unknown), and none of the stereotyped sentiment of the minstrel tradition. Alain Locke brings this out in one of the sixteen essays in *An Anthology of American Negro Literature*, edited by Sylvestre C. Watkins (Modern Library. 95 cents). The essays and stories cover the whole field of life's cultural impact on the Negro in America. It is fortunate that this highly valuable work appears in an edition accessible to all.

The hold of the folk myth—its power to inspirit a people who have left their homeland—is illustrated in Fred L.

Holmes' *Old World Wisconsin* (E. M. Hale. \$2.50). Farmers of Swiss stock reenact every autumn, at New Glarus, Schiller's drama of Wilhelm Tell. A moving pageant, it lifts the countryside out of dulling absorption into a world of heroic action and deathless memory. This instance is one of many. Folkways of sixteen nations are kept alive in as many cultural nuclei in Wisconsin; destiny tossed these colonies into the broad lap of the state and they keep the taproot of their soul-faith alive by such festivals, a part of the rich pattern of American life.

*The American Character* by D. W. Brogan (Knopf. \$2.50) is an overall study and interpretation of the American people, wholly sympathetic, deeply discerning, by a British scholar who knows our literature and our history as few know it, who has traveled forty of the States, lived in most of the great cities—always interested in the people themselves rather than in the statistical greatness of their achievements. Broad, hopeful, humanistic, we need this view of us as much as the English.

## SOCIAL GROWTH IN THE U.S.A.

Are we choked with social problems? Weighed down with responsibilities? Discouraged about the future? Live a while in Irving's world, just after 1800, through Van Wyck Brooks' inviting pages, *The World of Washington Irving* (Dutton. \$3.75). Justifiable self-indulgence, for it refreshes the mind. Smaller than ours, with little more than a seaboard population, that world is roomier than today's; more exuberant, with myriad ways for sober enterprise or for reckless adventure. Even leisure was worth while. Culture was at a premium, learning and art respected.

Here are persons galore whose names we dimly recall or who are quite forgotten. Re-animated, they add vastly to the interest of the book. They reveal the very atmosphere of the time, its social concerns, attitudes, standards. Cobbett (from England) could report, "Every farmer is a reader . . . well informed . . . modest without shyness." Jefferson in 1814, "We have no paupers." Ideas counted. The people valued them. Irving, a natural aristocrat, believed in the people. So did Cooper, whose background was the same. Yet by 1840, both had misgivings. The

crudeness and money-grabbing of democracy's growing pains had begun to displace the urbanity of earlier decades. The South had withdrawn into a feudal world of its own. Industries were gaining powers on which the Founders had not reckoned. Idyllic folkways and Sleepy Hollow were becoming a legend. But Irving's tales still live.

Social growth is change. Fifty years after Irving, money, not birth, meant position atop the social ladder in New York. In Boston, money and birth often seemed to coincide. Karl Schriftgiesser's biography of Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Gentleman From Massachusetts* (Little, Brown. \$3), is more than the life of one who set out to be a reformer and ended a proponent of party politics and of power. It is the saga of protection, high tariff, looming imperialism, Mahan's naval theory, foreign entanglements, Teddy Roosevelt young . . . and older, the Wilson era, the birth of the League of Nations and its sabotage by isolationists under the leadership of Lodge. It is a period of history, vitally handled, told from inside sources, and told admirably. A bracing and a challenging book, with much material hitherto unrevealed.

Isolate nationalism—to coin a phrase for it—had won. Following an interim of orgy, of speculation, and varied excesses, came a new period. Basil Rauch, in his *History of the New Deal* (Creative Age Press. \$2.50), divides it into two phases, a First New Deal, concerned mainly with recovery, and a Second New Deal, pressing basic reforms. He shows how the acts of the First were gratefully received by banks and other interests, and how the measures proposed by the Second were at first approved, then hampered or frustrated, and finally fought openly. Meanwhile labor and the farms had gained material advantages. A start had been made toward co-ordinating our economic security with that of the nations overseas. This

tendency created a rift between two views of the national welfare. The upshot of that rift Mr. Rauch will discuss in a later volume, the present one covering only the years 1933 to 1938. Basil Rauch, a true historian with keen mind and balanced judgment, gives both sides of every controversy, admits mistakes and failures of the Second New Deal, but brings out the true aims of plans and policies in a program which is necessarily experimental, since final solutions are not yet known. Political thinking is revealed as a concern of all citizens.

But the mind of most citizens is confused. John Dos Passos in *State of the Nation* (Houghton Mifflin. \$3) quotes the manager of a camp for migrant workers: "When people don't know what gripes them they pick on something and call it bureaucracy, or communism, or the New Deal." And this, from a taximan, born in Moscow, irked at the heedlessness he sees about him in Washington, D.C., the want of respect for our country: "In Russia we know about war and hardship. You can take the man out of the country but you cannot take the country out of the man." Dos Passos' own view is best stated in his opening "Letter to a Friend," which should ease the mind of men in the service who feel that labor is not backing them in the fight.

Agnes E. Meyer's *Journey Through Chaos* (Harcourt Brace. \$3) alludes more to a confusion of life-mode and occupation than of mind. Workers and managers in the nation-wide war industries and other centers where she visits know pretty well what they want and why. What these dislocated families endure is often distressing. Darkest is the chapter on Negro housing in the Nation's capital. Brightest is a scene at Brunswick, Maine, where hearts function as well as heads, and the community co-operates as a whole. Heroism and high morale she finds in some

individuals in all localities. As an investigator, she is not excelled.

Most reassuring of all new books of recorded observation among the people is Simeon Strunsky's *No Mean City* (Dutton, \$3). His travel is confined to New York—by bus, subway, or afoot—and there he finds all America represented: if not in person, then by impress of taste and outlook and ideas. He finds there, too, most of Europe and a great deal of Asia.

He has distilled his urbane observations in many pages of highly agreeable reading, much of it corrective of ideas and misconceptions which do neither New York City nor the country at large any good. In these chapters, the almost forgotten art of the essayist survives, and the quite forgotten charm—both made palatable to today's taste by their freshness, humor, and astute perception of things most people would miss.

## NOVELISTS SPEAK OUT

Anti-Semitism is not an issue in certain parts of Canada: it is an institution. One must note this before reading a novel in which the tension caused by a Gentile-Jew situation within the family might seem overdrawn. In her fine novel, *Earth and High Heaven* (Lippincott, \$2.50), Gwethalyn Graham challenges a social tradition in which the young Jew is barred forever from any but a business relation with the members of an upper-class non-Jewish family. Hearts must be broken before that barrier can be struck down. It takes courage to dare that venture, face ostracism and—what is worse—wreck the peace of a parental home. Even if that peace is part complacency in illusion, challenging it still hurts. It takes courage to arraign an institution so intrenched as this. Miss Graham has it. The task is admirably and thoroughly done in a work that will put her in the front rank of novelists. Standard social measurements, ready-made definitions, are exposed for what they are—a device to avoid valuing any one of the banned class as an individual, on his real merits, and instead identify him as a type—in order to reject him, in defense of caste. The analysis of minds wracked by prejudice is superb here, and, purely as

story, the dramatic intensity pyramids to the highest point.

*Out of These Roots* (Caxton, \$3) is Boris Todrin's first novel, following five books of poetry that won critical acclaim. As background for the American scene, he here weaves a rich tapestry of Russian lives, of Jewish families and their kin, dwelling in Orsha and Kiev on the river Dnieper. So many of our citizens have their origins in these roots that it is well to recall, to recreate them, imaginatively. Mr. Todrin does this so vividly that life as lived in Brooklyn after the migration seems cheap and tawdry in comparison. Ardor, hope, and dreams are followed by frustration, but hope persists, the hope to see a dream fulfilled in their children.

Dorothy Duncan's *Partner in Three Worlds* (Harper, \$2.75) is fiction only in form, autobiographical in content, with authenticity in every line. The story, of intense personal interest, is told by a Czech whose vivid memory revives boyhood in pre-World War I in Prague; youth in the War; early manhood in democratic Czechoslovakia; the whirl of social and professional life at the capital; dramatic reverses in fortune. Most significant for American readers is the un-



## THE BOOKSHELF

folding tale of one man's learning of a democracy of living (not government) in a country wholly new to the experiment—defined here as “living in harmony and fruitful enterprise.” But abruptly all is destroyed and swept away by the Munich Pact and events following. This becomes the story of survival from shock, or resumed partnership in the world task of rebuilding harmony and fruitful enterprise out of ruin. Absorbingly written.

The second book this season to stress the fact that whites and Negroes once worked constructively together in the South is Henrietta Buckmaster's *Deep River* (Harcourt Brace. \$3). The first was Howard Fast's *Freedom Road*. The scene is Georgia in the period immediately preceding the Civil War, and Simon Bliss is typical of the mountain men who believed in the fundamental equality of all mankind and fought slavery and the political power of the slave holders. An important and moving book.

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OF COMMON GROUND, published quarterly at New York 3, New York, for October 1, 1944.

State of New York } ss.  
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared M. Margaret Anderson, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Editor of Common Ground and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y. Editor, M. Margaret Anderson

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M. MARGARET ANDERSON, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1944.

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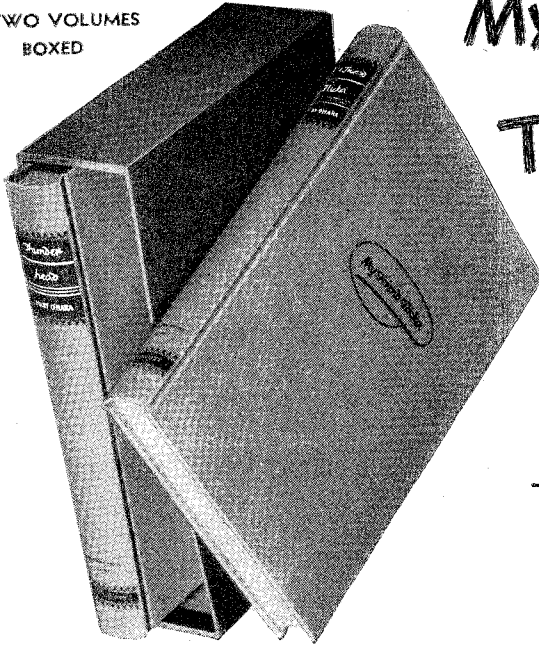
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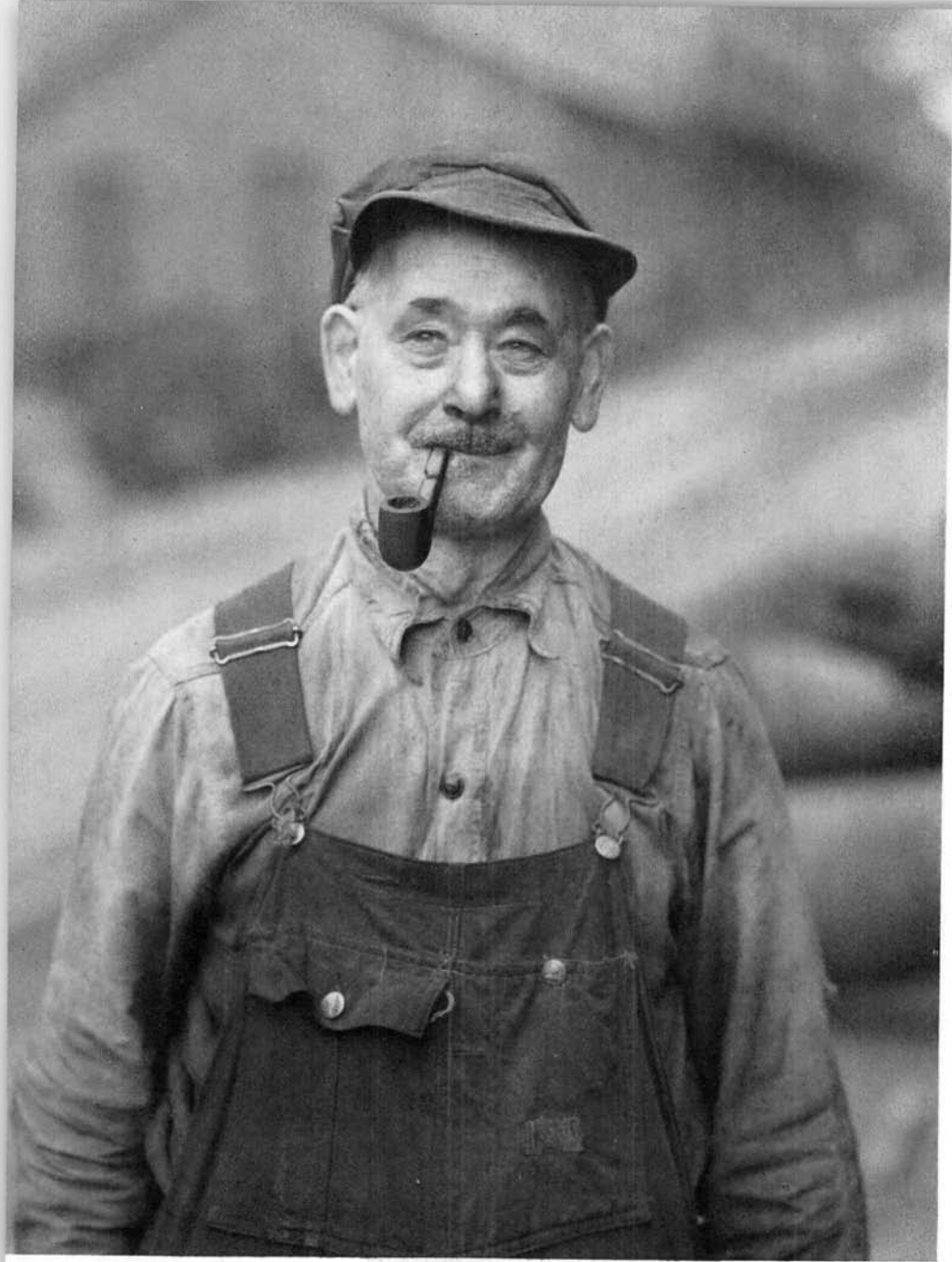
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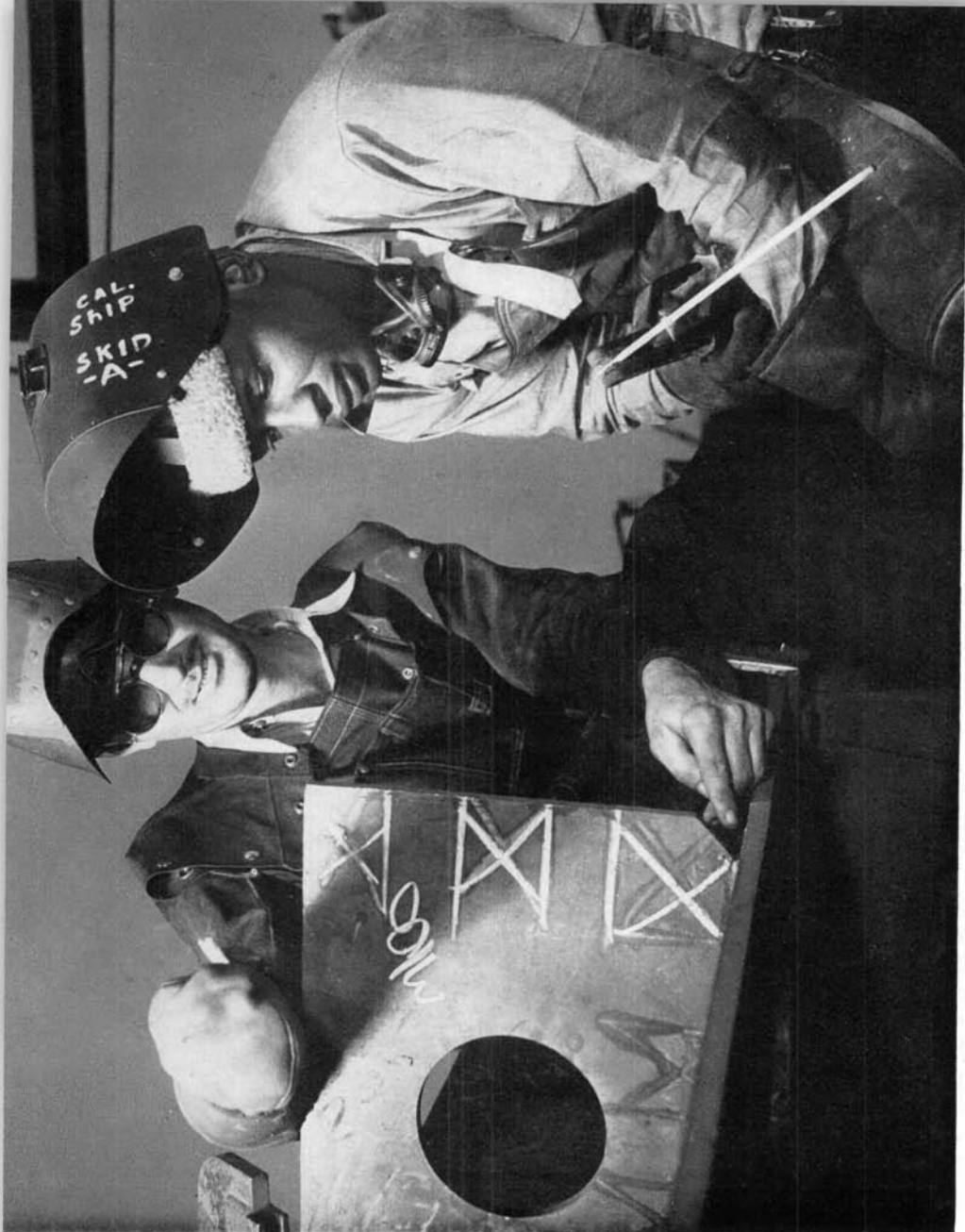
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